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M O R A L T A L E,

I N A

S E R I E S O F L E T T E R S.

I N T H R E E V O L U M E S.

The ways of Heav'n are dark and intricate,
Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors :
Our understanding traces them in vain,
Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search :
Nor sees with how much art the windings run,
Nor where the regular confusion ends.

ADDISON.

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T H E
A N C H O R E T.

L E T T E R I.

Miss SYLVIA BEVERLY to Miss EMILY MUSGRAVE.

Meadfield.

HOW cruel is separation!—Believe me, my dear, I find the severe truth, in being deprived of my Emily, at a time too when I most require the confidence of a friend. Will you not be apt to exclaim, Is this the language of Sylvia, whom late I left under no kind of embarrassment? Surely no!—It is indeed:—for since your departure from hence I am really degenerated,—become another creature. Oh Emily! what an alteration have a few days wrought in the disposition of your Sylvia!—Now Female Curiosity, art thou not extended on the rack of Suspence, till thou learnest the reason of this mighty change?—Well, in consideration of your faithful promise, (which this moment I fancy I hear you make) not to reveal the important secret, I will loose the bands that tie you to the painful wheel. And now prepare; lend your attention while I unfold the embarrassing cause of this long preamble.—I protest, Emily, my

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hand shakes at this instant with violent emotion, as if unwilling to transcribe the tale, even to thee, my friend.—Would to heaven you could guess the wondrous event, then should I not experience these numberless palpitations;—but that is impossible,—therefore I will endeavour to recollect my scattered senses, range my ideas in proper order, and begin methodically to impart the following story.

THE day after your sister and I left Meadfield, to be present at the celebration of Sir Robert's nuptials with your new mother, our dear Mrs. Ramsay was earnestly intreated to attend an elderly lady in the neighbourhood, who was suddenly taken ill.—She, who is in reality the Lady Bountiful of the country, instantly repaired to the afflicted mansion; and, the evening being serene, I threw down my work, took my guittar, and hasted to the favourite arbour, which you and I have often compared to the nuptial bower in Milton. Here I placed myself, and with a mind calm and tranquil, as that of our General Mother before the Fall, began to warble forth “If e'er the cruel tyrant Love;”—unmindful of the words, the tune alone, of which I was ever fond, engrossed my whole attention:—I had proceeded to that expressive declaration, “And must be turn'd to hate,”—when a voice pronounced, with much energy, “Forbid it heaven!”—I started, looked round with great astonishment, as I had imagined myself entirely alone;—but behold, Emily, a suppliant swain, by whom the ejaculation was uttered, now advanced, threw himself at my feet, and with the most persuasive eloquence, pronounced me absolutely mistress of his fate; he implored my pardon for his presumptuous declaration, and then proceeded with such forcible arguments, yet all humble and delicate, that I can only say, with the admiring Statira, “Good Gods! how he did talk.”

I suppose, Emily, now I have proceeded thus far, your own divining imagination will help you to draw aside the veil that conceals the suppliant youth,
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and—Frederic Ramsay already stands confess'd.—The gracious aid of ever-radiant truth has helped thee here, my friend!—You see I am already in heroicks: what a powerful assistant is that little Urchin, (spite of his blindness) in helping his votaries up the steep hill of Parnassus! Well, Emily, you may expect my next epistle will be quite in the poetic style; blank verse, or silver-sounding rhyme at least: but at present let me descend from the height of this bewitching reverie, and inform you how I deigned to receive this important declaration—Oh! with all the haughty pomp of some princeps in romance;—for when the humble youth had finished his delicate and submissive harangue, I rose with great dignity, and with a severe frown expressed an angry surprise at the freedom he had taken; insisting that he should ever forbear a repetition of what he then had uttered; nay, I told him further, that nothing but the sincere regard I entertained for his mother, should hinder me from informing Sir Robert Musgrave of his offence.—Offence! Emily,—a proper word to support my dignity, was it not?—Yet *entre nous*, my friend, setting aside the infinite esteem I bear Mrs. Ramsay, it would be far from my thoughts to acquaint your worthy papa with such trifling affairs, or to perplex him at this happy crisis, with a silly girl's adventures. Now do not you be satirical, child, and construe my unwillingness to disturb Sir Robert's repose, into any favourable opinion on Frederic's conduct.—Poor youth!—I pity him,—yet—not in that malicious degree which is often esteemed the leading step to contempt: on the contrary, I now more than ever repine at my ignorance, as to the former life of the worthy Mrs. Ramsay: there is certainly some inconceivable mystery relating to the situation of this amiable woman, who was undoubtedly born to shine in a much higher sphere, than you or I, Emily, ever yet have known her; all her actions demonstrate the truth of this opinion.

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SIR Edward (my late father) was certainly no stranger to this good lady's circumstances; he ever professed himself her friend, and entertained for her the highest respect and regard.—This was made evident by his last request, specified in his will; which was, that I might remain with this dear woman, till the important period of twenty-one.—But where, in the name of wonder, am I wandering? Scribbling on at a ridiculous rate, and only repeating to my Emily, what she has heard an hundred times at least.

WELL then, shall I conclude, or return once more to Frederic?—But what have I to say of him?—Why nothing:—but that the poor youth seems, (ever since that said scene in the garden) in every look, every word and action, as fearful to offend.—Whom?—Why my Emily's sincere

SYLVIA BEVERLY,

LETTER II.

Mrs MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

POOR Frederic! or shall I join you with him, and say—poor Sylvia!—for really, my friend, I am inclined to think your ladyship stands in need of a small share of compassion:—Yes—yes, you are certainly enrolled in the list of that same blind Urchin;—nay, by your own confession;—for if I mistake not, you acknowledge yourself one of his votaries, in that part of your letter, where you speak of the Deity's assisting you to mount the Parnassian hill; besides, you are degenerated, become another creature, since I left you;—that is to say, since that important evening.—But, in the name of Cupid, Sylvia, do not use the word degenerated—rather say, you are exalted, in your sentiments, at least.

OH love! love! what contradictions dost thou occasion!—how can a lady speak of degeneracy in one moment, when, the next, she describes herself as assuming majestic dignity, and conveying despair and death in her very frowns?

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BUT I will animadver^t no farther at present, only I sincerely hope, that fortune will smile on the deserving Fréderic, and one day clear those mists, which now encircle both his worthy mother and himself: for I readily coincide with you, Sylvia, in a belief, that they were born with many more advantages than they at present possess. If so, why could you behave with that haughtiness to the supplicating youth? who, according to the system of Romance, may be some potent prince in disguise. Therefore suspend all hasty determinations, and decide nothing, either for or against, till a future period shall convince you of the merit of your swain.

But a truce with advice; I shall, for this time, drop the subject, after having assured you, Sylvia, that I shall not disturb Papa's present transports, by a recital of his fair Ward's adventure. I understand you, my dear friend; O! I am sure you would break your heart to be separated from Mrs. Ramsay.

WILL you now permit me to give you an account of the splendid nuptials of your Guardy with Lady Susan Arundel?—You mention no such desire in your letter, but I will readily excuse the omission, in consideration of your interesting adventure, and, unasked, attempt a description.

YET, as I am sensible it will give my Sylvia pleasure to hear of our advantage, I must first inform you, that her ladyship would not consent to papa's desire, till he had settled on Charlotte and myself ten thousand pounds each, either at his decease, or when we chose to follow her ladyship's example, and, with proper approbation of parents, to enter the connubial state, which, heaven knows, is far from my thoughts.—Indeed, Sylvia, you may believe me.—No kneeling, sighing swain hath as yet put my heart into any bustle;—the poor thing seems perfectly inanimate;—but how it may behave when accosted with the delicate humility of a prostrate Fréderic—I know not.—Well, there is something amazingly infatuating in such imaginations, that is certain; else I should

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should not have wandered so far from my promise, nor have dwelt upon a theme so widely different—a kneeling lover! — What! when I was about to describe—a husband! — Different indeed, Sylvia, in general, if we may trust the testimony of our senses.—However, papa seems a lover still; but how long even he may remain so, succeeding months will best reveal. Now then for my promise.

SHALL I attempt it in the style of Parnassus, flowing with eloquence and all the graces of poetry?—I know you love something that is sublime, Sylvia, therefore assist me.—Now do I not know which of the Muses to invoke on this solemn occasion; not one of the Tuneful Nine, I verily believe, ever turned their thoughts towards matrimony; how then can I expect inspiration from them?—I believe I must even deliver it in humble prose, and trust to your indulgence for the excuse of all defects, even in that style.

To begin methodically, as you observe; That auspicious morn the company assembled at Lady Susan's, in G—— Square, as early as eight, according to her desire; where, I verily believe, as great a miracle was seen, as any upon record in genteel life, for fifty years past;—so many beaux and belles arrayed in elegant splendor at that unfashionable hour!

THE bride was dressed in a white lustering sack and petticoat, flounced and trimmed; with a genteel silver net—the perfect emblem of innocence from head to foot:—Papa had presented Charlotte and me with new dresses on the occasion; her's was a pale pink, with a small running chain of silver:—and consulting what would best suit the auburn tresses of his Emily, he had chosen for me a bright lemon colour with silver stars.—But I should weary you with a repetition of all the fine things exhibited that happy morn, so I will proceed to inform you, that after the awful ceremony had been performed at St. James's church, by the Right Reverend the Bishop of ——, the whole company attended

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the new-made pair to Richly Park, the seat of the late Sir Jasper Arundel, which you know is thirty-seven miles from London. Here we arrived about three, and were received with the utmost politeness and respectful affection, by the Countess Dowager of L——, mother to the bride, who was to have honoured the nuptial ceremony with her presence; but some particular reason, known at that time only to herself and her lovely daughter, hindered our receiving that satisfaction.

HERE has been some mystery too, my friend, which, at present, I am not quite acquainted with; but as you know I am rather a female Marplot, as to the inquisitive part of the character, I intend to unriddle the seeming intricate affair at a convenient opportunity.

You may remember, I have often wondered how so charming a woman as Lady Susan H——, with the advantages of birth and fortune, could doom herself a willing sacrifice to Sir Jasper Arundel; a man more than twice her age, loaded with infirmities, possessing no one requisite towards happiness but an immense estate:—But I am wandering again from my subject, and am rudely forsaking the brilliant company at Richly Park.—Well then, to proceed—

AFTER a most sumptuous dinner, consisting of all the variety that earth, air, and water could produce, we were shewn into a large saloon, decorated in the highest taste; the furniture, a bright rose-coloured damask with silver fringe; which is admirably well adapted to the hangings—a paper of silver-frosted ground, over which there is a running trail of rose-coloured flowers: in the middle of this elegant room suspends a large chandelier of beautiful cut glass, containing thirty lights; with two smaller also, one at top and the other at bottom, each containing twenty; so that when the whole were illuminated, the superb splendor of the room was not to be equalled, for the ground of the paper, and the fringe of the furniture, made a mighty pretty glitter;—

ter;—but what engaged my most particular attention, was the cieling, which is painted in a masterly manner; the history, poor Ariadne's grief after the departure of her faithless Theseus.—The poet could not have expressed, with all his pathetic eloquence, the sufferings of this fair afflicted, with greater energy than is here displayed:—Her grief seems exquisite; while, with streaming eyes, she follows the swift gliding vessel that contains her fugitive lover.—At a small distance, the rosy God of wine and mirth appears, bearing the nectared cup, and attended by his joyous followers. He seems hastening to the weeping fair one, with intent to sooth her cares, and make full reparation for the crime of Theseus, by offering her—himself.

WELL, I will now wish the laughter-loving God success, and descend once more to the company.—Early in the evening, such of the guests who chose to stay, were entertained with a concert of a few, but well-chosen instruments; after which, for about two hours, we amused ourselves with the cotillons, and then adjourned to supper.

AT twelve, Charlotte and I attended our lady mother (not much older than ourselves by the bye) to the bridal chamber; and a little after one the whole company retired to rest.

WE remained at Richly Park for near a fortnight, and when we returned to town the Countess was prevailed upon to accompany us; she seems a most amiable woman, and it is the opinion of many, I believe, that her ladyship would have been a more proper match for your Guardy, Sylvia, than her blooming daughter; —let me have your opinion when you have seen both, which, I apprehend, will be soon,—sooner, perhaps, than you imagine, my friend:—Now do not anticipate a thousand unnecessary fears;—only a short visit, or so:—no, no!—you are not going to be separated from Mr. ——. Shall I put an S, Sylvia, or leave it as it is, only adding the name of Ramsay?—Bless me! what

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what a multiplicity of lines have I written!—you will never have patience to go through them.—Pray tell me ingenuously in your next, if you were not tired with my unconscionable loquacity? and if so, chastise, as you think proper, your troublesome,—yet sincere

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER III.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

WELL, my dear sarcastic friend, you certainly deserve some praise for all that redundancy of wit, though leveled at your Sylvia.—Chastise you!—yes, you may be assured I shall not for the length of your epistle, but only for some passages contained therein.

You are, undoubtedly, a little saucy, provoking—but as the facetious Sir Harry Sycamore says, “I will not put myself in a passion.”—Yet, let me ask your penetrating ladyship, why you are so severe in censuring me for the crime of my presumptuous swain?—“Enrolled in the list of Cupid!” why, really, child, you are downright insulting, and have actually occasioned me much embarrassment: you will not believe this I suppose; without I give you a full, true, and particular account, why and wherefore:—well then, you shall hear:—THE morning your pacquet arrived, Mrs. Ramsay and I were walking in the garden after breakfast; I, listening with much attention to the dear woman, who was expatiating, with her usual gratitude, on the thousand beauties of the flowery creation; drawing the most fine and judicious remarks from objects, considered only by unthinking minds, as mere insignificant trifles.

The downy pyle that cloaths the pansy, the variegated tints of a polyanthus afford sufficient occasion for her to adore that Being, whose creative hand is visible throughout all Nature.—Thus employed, we had just reached that said arbour, and were hardly seated, when Frederic appeared at the bottom of the walk, holding in

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his hand your flourishing epistle.—As I had some pre-faging apprehensions you would be a little saucy, or so, in being made my confidant, I experienced a few palpitations in receiving it before Mrs. Ramsay, lest the dear woman, knowing from whom it came, might have desired a sight of it.—The youth advanced with much respect, and said, “A letter from Miss Musgrave, I believe, Miss Beverly!” I took it with a forced smile, saying, “You are undoubtedly right, Sir.”—Then turning to Mrs. Ramsay, “Now, madam, I hope our dear Emily (you hardly deserve the name) will, in this, entertain us with a description of Sir Robert’s nuptials with Lady Susan.”—So saying, I begged permission to read it; Frederic had placed himself by me, seeming willing to be entertained also;—but what confusion did I both experience and betray, when I observed the two first words of your letter.—How to behave I knew not; both mother and son seemed attentive to hear me read the contents of your perplexing pacquet. Oh! how (in that hurry of my imagination) did I accuse myself of entrusting the important secret from the false repository of my own breast!—never was dilemma greater than I experienced at that instant; and, had not Fortune befriended me in the likeness of Lucina, I really know not how I should have extricated myself.

SOON after I had broken the seal, Jenny advanced with precipitancy to the arbour, and informed her benevolent mistress, that a poor neighbour was extremely ill, having just been delivered of three children.—Blessed be the fruitful dame, thought I.

THE compassionate Mrs. Ramsay, ever willing to administer any assistance in her power, immediately repaired to the poor woman, after assuring me, that she would return as soon as possible to be entertained with her Emily’s letter.—So saying she left me, though not alone:—the inquisitive Frederic remained.—But, however, as he had confessed himself my most humble slave, I was under no perplexity to remain silent concerning your epistle to him; therefore, putting it again in the

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cover, I arose; and, after walking one turn round the garden, attended by my Strephon, and discoursing on indifferent matters, I retired to my chamber, and there soon ran through the whole.—How often did I congratulate myself on this fortunate escape from manifest confusion.—It was now highly necessary to make myself mistress of the letter, in order to read it properly when Mrs. Ramsay should return.—Yes, Emily, spite of your provoking innuendos, I went through the whole tolerably well, adding an S to your expressive Mr. — which produced the most affectionate transport in this worthy woman, who snatched me to her bosom, while the sympathizing tear stood glistening in her eye.—This embarrassment overcome, be careful, Emily, how you expose me to the like again.

AND now, thanks to my friend, for the description of my Guardy's nuptials:—elegant indeed, in every article except one, which, according to my judgment, was infinitely beneath persons of their rank and fortune to conform to:—you will readily imagine I mean the public celebration in St. James's church.—Why could not Sir Robert's chaplain, the worthy Mr. Dennison, have tied the indissoluble knot at home, without their being subject to bear the low-bred curiosity of a gaping multitude? Well, Emily, there are many parts of the ceremony I so much object to, that I am positively determined, if I should chance to be persuaded that way, the whole affair shall be as private as possible;—but this is talking of a circumstance that, perhaps, may never happen to me. At present (as you say) there is no appearance of such an event.

Now would I mention something concerning Frederic Ramsay, but I really dare not;—you will transgres again, I fear, and put me into other palpitations, when there may not be a second teeming dame to relieve me; so I shall be silent, my friend, till I receive a faithful promise from your own lips, that you will be more reserved for the future.

WHEN do you think, Emily, that I may prepare for the journey,—which I shall be very desirous of, on many accounts.—Now do not you put on a sarcastic smile when you come to this declaration, as if you hardly believed me.—A short visit will be perfectly agreeable, I assure you; for besides the curiosity you have raised in me, to behold the Countess of S*****, I earnestly desire to see my poor aunt Cowley, who, I am informed, leads a most unhappy life with that bashaw her husband.

OH! Emily, what an exchange has she made! from the gay, volatile, lovely Amanda Beverly, whose company was ever courted and desired, almost to adoration, now degenerated (here I may use the word with much propriety) into the tame domestic slave—a wife!—a wife to a surly, haughty, senseless tyrant, who, proud of his dominion, exercises it with a mean, ungenerous brutality, over an amiable and deserving woman!—I protest, Emily, the very idea has sunk my spirits so much beneath their wonted pitch, that I will haste to conclude, lest I should either grow most insufferably stupid, or weary you with a repetition of gloomy conceits. Adieu, therefore, my dear girl, when my spirits are more in the allegro strain, I will endeavour to communicate a part to my Emily. From her sincerely affectionate

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER IV.

FREDERIC RAMSAY, Esq; to Captain PIERCENEY.

WELOCOME to England, my dear George, thrice welcome at this important crisis.—Oh! Pierceny, what a secret have I to communicate;—excuse me if I should be guilty of prolixity—the pleasing theme may tempt me to dwell too long on many particulars; but my friend must pardon what I shall with difficulty avoid.

You may remember, when the late Sir Edward Beverly proposed to my mother that I should attend him to Venice, the raptures my young ambitious heart experi-

enced; the prospects that then opened on my imagination, were terminated with a view of glittering grandeur; urged, in a great measure, with the pleasing desire of re-instanting my mother in a degree of that affluence, which (young as I was) by many observations made on her discourse, I had reason to believe she formerly enjoyed.

THE worthy Baronet approved my ardour, and gave the greatest encouragement I could desire, bestowing on me a genteel and lucrative employment, whereby I might have risen to what my most sanguine wishes tempted me to expect;—when, alas! Death, that inexorable tyrant, (after three years residence at Venice) blasted, in a moment, all those pleasing scenes, by depriving me of my benefactor.

JUST before this dire event you left England, as I afterwards heard, with your noble friend, Lord *****, by whose interest, I find, you obtained your commission: I apprehend you reached soon after I left it,—but my grief was so exquisite, that no sooner was a person appointed to succeed Sir Edward, than I instantly gave up all hope of continuing in my post; determined to leave Italy, and to return to England: and, indeed, had I wished to have remained longer in Venice, I should have been disappointed, as I soon understood, that another person was nominated to succeed me also.

THUS depressed in spirits and expectation, I embarked for my native shore, and hastened to Meadfield with melancholy expedition, having before informed my mother and Miss Beverly (the charming daughter of Sir Edward) with the sad catastrophe.

My affectionate parent received me with manifest signs of maternal transport, mixed with expressive sensibility on our loss:—the lovely Sylvia also, met me with a sister's joy—and amidst the unfeigned grief she experienced for her father's death, hinted a fear of being separated from my mother, under whose care she had been entrusted by Sir Edward, on our departure from England; but on inspecting the last will of the Baronet, it

appeared, that, notwithstanding he had appointed his friend, Sir Robert Musgrave, guardian to his charming daughter, yet he particularly enjoined, that the lovely maid should remain with my mother till she came of age.

SIR Robert's two daughters (till lately) have been with us, on a visit to Miss Beverly, between whom, and the youngest Miss Musgrave, a most intimate friendship has subsisted from their earliest infancy.

THUS far, dear Pierceney, have I proceeded in an historical manner, by which you may form some judgment of the state of affairs.—Now to the delightful theme that engrosses all my thoughts; forgive, George, such heroic flights as I may be tempted to take in the course of my descriptive progress. After so long a preamble, I imagine it will be needless to declare myself an humble captive to the charms of Miss Beverly:—Such indeed I am;—conquered, George, by a similarity of those perfections, which the Numidian Prince, in the Play of Cato, attributes to his Marcia, in the following lines:

"Tis not a set of features, or complexion,
The tincture of a skin that I admire;
Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
Fades in his eye, and palls upon the sense.
The virtuous Marcia tow'rs above her sex;
True, she is fair, (Oh! how divinely fair!)
But still the lovely maid improves her charms
With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
And sanctity of manners.

After this confession, let me further relate, that about a fortnight ago I assumed courage—(rather let me style it presumption) to declare my passion to my fair enslaver. It was received with an appearance of displeasure, not very flattering to my wishes; yet does my heart persevere in the delightful hope, that an assiduous humility may, in time, soften the rigour of my charmer's resentment.

OH ! George ! why am I kept in ignorance of my birth ?—my mother still remains inflexible to all my enquiries concerning it :—When I am inquisitive, she only says, with symptoms of the most poignant sorrow,—“ Forbear, my child, to search into what must, of necessity, be concealed.”

WHAT can this mean ?—am I not arrived at an age sufficiently mature to be entrusted with the important secret.—Such it must be, attended with circumstances equally embarrassing.—I frequently attempt, by distant enquires, to fathom the profound mystery, but she is ever on her guard, evading the least hint that may any way tend to an eclaircissement.

THUS situated, will you not accuse me of daring insolence, in suffering my thoughts to rise so high as the daughter of my benefactor ?—He, I believe, was the only person made acquainted with the secret of my birth ; and this thought frequently flatters me, when I consider, he often treated me more as his superior, than as a person dependant on his favour and protection.

BUT I am wandering far from my intended promise, and, instead of heroic flights, am groveling in anxious uncertainty !—Forgive me, George ;—and now let me pursue the far more pleasing thought of what has flattered my presumptuous passion.

LAST Thursday Miss Beverly received a letter from her friend, Emily Musgrave ; my mother and I were present when she proposed reading it for our amusement, saying, that she imagined it contained a description of Sir Robert’s nuptials with Lady Susan Arundel.—We sat with attention, expecting the charming Sylvia to begin ; who, no sooner cast her eyes on the contents, than I perceived her countenance change,—her perplexity was visible to a lover’s eye, which, by an involuntary glance, I soon found was occasioned by the two first words in the letter, which were “ poor Frederic !” Just, at this moment, my charming Sylvia was relieved from her dilemma by a hasty message to my mother, from a poor neighbour extremely ill.

URGED by a fond desire of farther information, good manners seemed subverted by a lover's curiosity ; I snatched the favourable moments for a second glance, as she held the letter still open, and perceived—" Poor Sylvia!"—with a few other words, such as " Compassion—Enrolled—blind Urchin, &c."—These all put together, with the fond expectation of a lover's hope—Oh ! George ! what flattering prognostics in an instant filled my thoughts.

As soon as my mother left the arbour in which we were sitting, Miss Beverly put the letter into her pocket, and walked one turn round the garden, attended by my enraptured self,—but not a word passed relating to any other topic than general conversation ;—she then retired to her apartment with manifest signs of anxious satisfaction : I likewise entered my closet, where I ruminated on the few, but expressive words I had seen in Miss Musgrave's letter.—That my Sylvia had mentioned me as a lover, was evident from the first words ; and how did my sanguine hopes aspire, when I reflected, that the same epithet had been bestowed on my charmer as on me.

OH ! Pierceney ! if you have ever felt the power of that all-conquering Deity, you will readily admit that I have reason for rapturous sensations, when circumstances like these contribute to promote them. Trifles, in the eyes of indifferent spectators, are often, by a lover's scrutinizing sight, considered as matters of the utmost moment.

ON the return of my mother, Miss Beverly again proposed reading her friend's letter, which was earnestly desired ; and now it was, for the first time in my life, that I doubted the testimony of my own eyes, for no such words as those I have already mentioned were uttered through the whole letter ; yet soon did reflection help me to account for this abridgment.—Charming concealment ! but for this prudent caution, what might not I have suffered—separated, perhaps, for life, from all my soul holds dear ; for, my mother, who is extremely tenacious of her candour in every circumstance, notwithstanding

standing the affliction she would experience in being deprived of her beloved Sylvia, I am certain—would have informed Sir Robert Musgrave, lest any clandestine affair should happen, whereby her integrity might be arraigned.

THUS situated, George, congratulate me on my present felicity.—Convinced of my charming Miss Beverly's secrecy, what may I not hope to attain by patience and perseverance?—Let me have your sentiments on the above particulars as soon as possible, that they may contribute to increase the pleasing reflections which, at present, engross each faculty of dear Pierceny's ever sincere

FREDERIC RAMSAY.

LETTER V.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

—SQUARE, near One in the morning.

BY the date of this letter, my Sylvia will not expect (fear I should say) many particulars. I am sensible, indeed, that my loquacity has sometimes embarrassed you; however, at present, I will fear nothing;—the commands of a father must be obeyed, else I should not have taken the pen at this unseasonable hour; but you shall hear your Guardy's orders, to which I expect you will pay all proper regard; and so forth.

THIS day, for the first time since his nuptials with Lady Susan, we dined alone; when the cloth was removed, Papa, addressing himself to me, said, “Emily, I desire you would write to your friend, Miss Beverly, and inform her, that if it be quite agreeable, (quite agreeable! mind that, Sylvia,) I shall hope for the pleasure of her company in town on Thursday next, and I will send the coach with you and your sister as far as D—— to meet her.”—Then turning to Lady Susan, and taking her hand with all the rapture of an overjoyed lover, he continued, “Or shall we go and meet the dear girl ourselves, my charming Sukey?—You will be

D

delighted with her vivacity, and"—I will proceed no farther, Sylvia,—but really your Guardy extolled your numberless perfections in terms so very elaborate, that had I been his charming Sukey, notwithstanding the lover-like tenderness with which he addressed her, I should absolutely have been tempted to look a little of the colour of my last sacque and petticoat ;—nay, I then thought her ladyship did appear rather grave at his encomium, but that was only a surmise raised by what would, perhaps, have been my sentiments had the case been my own.—Her ladyship, however, declined the offer with some genteel excuse, and agreed with Papa's first proposal of Charlotte and myself meeting you at D—.

So now prepare, child, take an affectionate leave for a short time, of our dear Mrs. Ramsay, and be ready to depart from Meadfield on Wednesday ;—but, I suppose, we shall have the pleasure of seeing her at D—, attended by our brother Frederic, who must be content to resign his lovely sister Sylvia, for a few weeks.

IN justice to myself, I should now conclude, and repose my languid head on the downy pillow.—Prettily expressed, is it not?—as Juliet says, “ I know you will say ay ;”—for which reason I shall sacrifice rest to a desire of farther applause, and proceed :—

THOUGH I am afraid I shall forfeit all pretensions to your approbation, if I begin to harangue on a subject so disgusting as that which at present employs my thoughts —A tyrant husband!—Yes, Sylvia, I really mean that scandal and perpetual odium to the character—Thomas Cowley!—imperious and provoking to your dear, your amiable aunt :—Gracious heaven, defend me from such a mate!—I should certainly—what?—Oh I know not; nor can I think how I should behave: though not with her calm fortitude, I am sensible.—How have I seen the dear woman sit with seeming tranquillity, and by every tender assiduity endeavour to appease his brutal ferocity, or provoking taunts, occasioned, perhaps, by the most trivial circumstance; nay, often by the very occurrence,

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that her obliging care led her to imagine would give him satisfaction.

I saw her yesterday, and imparted a considerable share of felicity to the dear woman, by informing her of your soon visiting the capital.

FAREWEL Sylvia,—what with the melancholy theme, and the late or rather early hour, I am almost stupefied; I am certain you'll readily pardon my concluding so much sooner than usual, when I tell you, that inactive god, Somnus, has shaken his drowsy poppies over the eyelids of your friend, who can hold the pen no longer than to bid you remember Wednesday, and expect next day to see Charlotte, and

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

L E T T E R VI.

Miss BEVERLY to Mrs. RAMSAY.

SURROUNDED by a continued hurry of elegant confusion, I have snatched the earliest moment to employ myself in writing to my ever dear Mrs. Ramsay. Believe me, madam, I sincerely regret the loss of that calm, unfulfilled life, I enjoyed at Meadfield. Here nothing but Dissipation reigns; who, though arrayed in splendor, and crowned with what the gay call pleasure, yet to me, the gilded phantom seems destitute of charms. But these remarks are needless, since you, dear madam, by many years of voluntary seclusion from the capital, have convinced me how heartily you despise a life of such pursuits: I shall therefore desist, and endeavour to amuse you with a few observations I have been able to make on the persons who compose the family of Sir Robert, I mean those lately introduced.

LADY Susan is in reality a fine woman, but to me she appears too much addicted to the reigning foible of play. Her chief delight seems centered in the card table; and I am much deceived if Spadille is not a most powerful rival to the Baronet. Charlotte Musgrave is greatly in her ladyship's esteem, by a similarity of sentiment in

that particular ; while Emily and I are seldom favoured with her conversation, as we take no great delight in discoursing only on Mattadores.

THE Countess of S— is a most amiable pattern for her whole sex to copy from ! she has already honoured me with a share in her esteem, which I shall account one of my greatest advantages, while I am to remain in the busy world ; as with this amiable lady I may enjoy a few rational moments, which are often excluded by paying and returning visits where the magic of painted paper so much prevails. In short, I have seen no other female since my arrival, who merits the least regard in comparison to the amiable Countess. Her whole manner and deportment are quite the reverse of those antiquated dowagers, who, regardless of the approach of the inexorable tyrant, seem by their careless security to have ensured the term of many succeeding years ; and appear unmindful of any other consideration than a Vole, or delightful Sans Prendre, though perhaps they are obliged to their spectacles, at the same time, to distinguish Spadille from Basto.

WHAT unaccountable caprice is this ! How shall we be able to reconcile this intoxicating employment, this murderer of time, to the faculties of rational creatures ! faculties that were bestowed for far more noble purposes. Not to the young unthinking part of mortals is this folly confined, but it is in general espoused, and more cordially embraced by those, who, instead of inculcating prudent admonitions to their childrens children, are themselves wretched dupes to the senseless and unmeaning employment of “ shuffling, ranging, and detaching a set of painted pasteboards.” — The amiable Countess is seldom prevailed on to partake of this idle diversion ; to her sentiments, which she has often expressed, am I indebted for the foregoing remarks, which you will allow are strictly just, as is every observation she makes : and do not, dear madam, suspect me of flattery, when I assure you that the Countess of S—, and my beloved Mrs. Ramsay, appear as two bodies actuated by one

soul ;—the same benign disposition shines conspicuous in both ; and both are worthy of that regard they must receive, from those who are so happy as to be acquainted with their infinite deserts.

YESTERDAY, accompanied by my friend Emily, I paid a morning visit to my aunt Cowley : Oh, madam, what an alteration in this dear woman !—She received me with the greatest marks of affection, but so different from that enchanting vivacity which she possessed, when last I saw her, that in every thing, but her regard for me, she seemed another creature.—As there is but a few years between us, notwithstanding she was sister to my father, she treated me as her friend and confidant.

WHEN Emily, with her accustomed liveliness, asked her where Sir John was, with the addition of the word *Brute*, my amiable Amanda, forcing a smile, (notwithstanding the starting tear) said, “Mr. Cowley does not deserve that name yet, Miss Musgrave!”—“Indeed but he does, (returned Emily)—but come, does he dine abroad ? if so, your niece and I will keep you company : but if he is to indulge you with his envyable society, we will leave you, for fear of angering the doughty champion by our presence.”

THE lovely Amanda was going to return an answer, when we heard a rap at the door, which, by my aunt’s countenance, I was sure prognosticated her bashaw’s approach. We could hear him, as he entered the hall, demand of the servant where his mistress was ?—A constant question, I find, not made with any fond enquiry, but inquisitive to know if she remains in her proper sphere as house-keeper ;—for her condition is little better than a prisoner, and that one of the most wretched.

HE soon entered the room, appeared rather surprised at seeing me, but, however, on my aunt’s informing him who I was, he vouchsafed to advance and salute me,—and said he was glad to see me ;—though I confess I could not believe him, as a contracted brow and churlish tone to his amiable wife, the next moment contradicted his words ;—turning to her with a surly look,

he said, "Why do not you order Thomas to go up the back stairs instead of those? What a d——d dirt the fellow has made!"

THIS accusation Emily endeavoured to palliate, by saying, "I believe that was made by me, Mr. Cowley; for as I stepped out of the chariot, my foot slipped into a puddle by the door, which dirted my shoe a good deal."—"No, no, (replied my worthy uncle) it is no such thing, Miss Musgrave."—Then turning to his lovely wife, whose eyes were swimming with tears at his unparalleled treatment, he exclaimed, "What the d——l's the matter with you now? I can never speak but you must whimper like a child; may not I order you to tell the servants their business without your behaving so like a fool?"—Oh madam! what did I feel at that instant, for my dear, my amiable aunt?—Her gentle bosom now swelled with silent anguish, she turned from him, and the brute (I can call him by no other title) appeared unmindful of her sufferings, or, if otherwise, enjoyed an inward satisfaction in them.—He, however, asked us to stay dinner; (which I complied with, for no other reason, than to administer all the consolation in my feeble power to the unfortunate Amanda;) then looking at his watch, Sir John enquired what time it would be ready? and was answered by my aunt, with the patience of an angel, "At four, my dear."—"Very well, (returned Cowley) I will step to the coffee-house for half an hour, and be back at that time;—Ladies, your servant."—So saying, he took his hat and left the room.—He was no sooner gone, than I burst into a flood of withheld tears, and running to my dear aunt, threw my arms around her, exclaiming, "What a miserable situation is my amiable Amanda's; united to a man regardless of her perfections, and treating her with cruel disrespect!" Grief at her sufferings choked farther utterance; we mingled our tears for some minutes, and Emily shared our sorrow.

AT length my aunt, recovering herself, said, while she tenderly embraced me,—“my dear Sylvia, do not

distress me by thus afflicting yourself; let us endeavour to compose ourselves before Sir John Cowley's return, else he will imagine I have been repeating some instances of his unhappy temper, which may much displease him."

ROUSED by this caution, I strove to follow my aunt's advice, and Emily and I accompanied her to her dressing-room, where she soon changed her dress, and then proceeded to the dining-room with the utmost haste, to observe if every thing, even to the minutest article, was in such a manner, as the thought would hinder any unkind complaint from her surly tyrant.

AT the appointed time he returned, and dinner was served with the utmost dispatch, the whole of which was admirably dressed;—yet many faults were found by the provoking Cowley:—in particular, an orange pudding, which I thought exceeding good, was loudly complained of by this rude husband,—who, giving his trembling wife one of his agreeable looks, said, "This is a d——d bad pudding—tastes of nothing—downright insipid."—Then turning to me, he said, "How can you eat it Miss Beverly?"—I assured him I thought it exceeding good;—"O! far from it, (replied the polite gentleman) it is nothing more than your complaisance, I am certain;—I suppose your aunt was in bed this morning, when she should have been employed in her domestic affairs."—Here he darted a look, truly diabolical, at the suffering Amanda, who answered this insulting speech with the greatest mildness, saying, "I am sorry you do not like it; but, indeed, my dear, I was present at the making of it, and thought it would have been extremely good."—"You thought, (returned her obliging help-mate) what signify your thoughts, had it been made properly you might have been sure of it, I suppose."

BUT I should tire you, dear madam, with a repetition of each disagreeable circumstance that happened during this repast. Never did I go through so painful a period; and nothing but the sincere regard I bear to my aunt could have restrained my open indignation against this insulting wretch. Soon after dinner, two gentlemen

sent up their names, and then, by desire, made their appearance.—Cowley received them with a smiling countenance, which made him appear to greater advantage than I believed possible; for though rather handsome, yet the surly contraction of his features, particularly when he speaks to his unhappy wife, renders him quite disgusting.

We were extremely glad of these visitors, as we soon retired to another apartment; leaving my worthy uncle, who now appeared all mirth and good humour, with the gentlemen. When we were again alone, I enquired of my aunt, with a forced smile, for which of his numberless perfections she had made choice of Mr. Cowley?—She answered my question by propounding another; saying, “What should you have thought of him, if he had never appeared otherwise than just now, when the gentlemen entered the room?”—I could not help acknowledging, but at that instant he looked an agreeable man; yet, in consideration of his cruel treatment of her, I could hardly confess he deserved even that epithet.—“Ah! my dear Sylvia, (returned my aunt) before the indissoluble knot was tied, he ever appeared cheerful, condescending, agreeable, and extremely generous in his sentiments, which hindered my unsuspiting heart from insisting on any settlement, though my fortune might have claimed it.—My brother (your late father) blamed me for my easy credulity, and too soon I found the justice of his apprehensions. We had not been married three months, when Mr. Cowley began to display that unhappy discontent at every action of mine, that renders my life far, very far from happy: he imprudently suffers a violent and morose impetuosity to gain the ascendant over the more temperate commands of reason; for instead of endeavouring to suppress his unaccountable caprice and unhappy peevishness, he rather indulges them,—at my expence at least; and though I believe I am perfectly indifferent to him, in respect of affection, yet the most jealous husband cannot be more averse to his wife’s being from home.—Thus am I al-

most a constant prisoner, doom'd to bear his severe taunts and undeserved reproaches.—I should not have discovered this disagreeable truth, had not his own behaviour obliged me, in justice to myself, to make the declaration ;—for I do assure you, my dear Sylvia, (continued my amiable aunt) I never have, by the least circumstance in my conduct, that I am sensible of, deserved this unkind,—this cruel malevolence.”

HERE the trickling tear stole down the cheek of the suffering Amanda, which again melted me to the same degree of sensibility.—My lovely friend perceiving our mutual sensations, said, “ For heaven’s sake, dear Mrs. Cowley, do not give way to this distressing softness, but exert yourself; why, before I would be subjected to the capricious disposition of such a wretch, I would absolutely leave him—elope to some foreign clime, where he should never hear of me!—Sir Edward Beverly has left you sufficient, without being obliged to do any thing beneath your birth for a maintenance.”

“ AH! Miss Musgrave, (replied my aunt) it is an easy thing for an unconcerned spectator to give advice relating to matrimonial feuds, especially when they reflect not on the binding, the solemn vow made before the altar, in the presence of the Most High!”—Here, with a look of exalted firmness, which might have well become a Roman Portia, she continued ;—“ No! let Mr. Cowley’s unhappy disposition prove ever so difficult to be borne, I am determined to show him, that though he departs from his, I never will be wanting in my duty, but wait with becoming fortitude the issue of our unhappy union.”

WHAT greatness of soul is this!—Will not my dear Mrs. Ramsay agree with me, that my beloved and amiable aunt merits a much greater portion of happiness than she has met with ;—but I am fearful of having already trespassed on her patience, (who is so susceptible of feeling for the unfortunate) by this long detail of disagreeable circumstances. I shall therefore, (with compliments to Mr. Ramsay) conclude, with assuring his wor-

thy mother, how sincerely I am, her obliged, and affectionate,

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

N. B. *Mrs. Ramsay's Answer is omitted, as no ways relating to the history.*

LETTER VII.

MISS BEVERLY TO MRS. RAMSAY.

ONCE again, dearest madam, am I favoured with an opportunity of indulging my principal desire of writing to my beloved Mrs. Ramsay; and, first, let me render my most grateful thanks for your obliging letter received on Thursday;—your excellent remarks conveyed both pleasure and instruction to your Sylvia; yet believe me, my amiable instructress, it is my constant prayer, that the perseverance and small fortitude I am possessed of, may never be put to the severe trial of being united to a man of Mr. Cowley's provoking temper:—But enough on the disagreeable theme.—And now let me relate an occurrence that happened yesterday, which has occasioned some speculation.

IN the morning, Sir Robert, Lady Susan, and the rest of the family, received an invitation to dine with Colonel Macclesfield, a worthy old gentleman I find, between whom and the Baronet has long subsisted an intimate friendship.—The Countess pleaded a slight indisposition, for not attending us to the Colonel's, which I seemed a little surprised at, as at breakfast she appeared extremely well, and in better spirits than usual;—but my friend Emily has informed me, that her ladyship has declined seeing any company whatever, (except those of the family) ever since she left Richly Park.—You may remember, dear madam, in that letter which contained the account of Sir Robert's nuptials, our Emily hinted, there was some mystery in the Countess's not honouring the ceremony with her presence, which I now believe.—On her ladyship's declining the visit, I insisted on keeping her company at home;—this, for some time, was opposed, till at length, I obtained my desire.—

We dined alone in her ladyship's dressing-room, the windows of which overlook the Park ;—when dinner was over, she asked me to play her one of Handel's songs ; I was willing to oblige the amiable representative of my dear Mrs. Ramsay, and instantly complied ; the harpsichord stood near the window, and her ladyship had placed herself by me, the better to attend to her favourite air in *Acis and Galatia*, “*Hush ye pretty warbling choir,*”—with which I had not gone above half through, when I heard the Countess say, with a faltering voice, “*Oh ! gracious God !*”—Alarmed, I instantly started from my seat, and soon found my assistance necessary ; her ladyship seeming ready to faint, and her countenance betraying great disorder, I begged her to smell at some *Eau de Luce*, which I took from a bracket in the dressing-room ; and would then have rang the bell for farther assistance, but her ladyship hindered me ; saying, with a tremulous voice, she was better,—begged my pardon for the abrupt interruption,—and desired me to proceed, after informing me, that her emotion was owing to a gentleman's having crossed the Birdcage-walk, who resembled a brother she tenderly loved, and who was long since dead.

I APPEARED satisfied with her ladyship's declaration, but could observe, notwithstanding her willingness to conceal the real cause of her embarrassment, something of more moment had happened.

I FINISHED the song, and soon after the Countess complained of a severe pain in her head ; I advised her to lie down, hoping that might relieve her ; she, with a few persuasions, followed my advice ; which I apprehend was to give a loose to those reflections her mind at that time laboured under ;—retiring to her chamber, I saw her ladyship no more that day ;—but this morning I observed Lady Susan and her in close conference.

EMILY, on her return from the Colonel's (which was not till near two in the morning) gave me an account of the manner in which they had employed their time ; consisting principally of the insipid conversation

of *Fish* and *Matt*, for the space of seven hours, allowing for the short interval of supper,—and her recital made me extremely glad I was not of the polite assembly.

INDEED I am heartily tired with the manners of the town, and acknowledge to my dear Mrs. Ramsay, that I have received only two evenings real amusement since my visiting the Capital, which were in seeing the inimitable Garrick perform the characters of HASTINGS and DON FELIX.

ADIEU! dear madam! I can at this time no longer continue my delightful employment, having just received a message from Sir Robert, requesting my company in his study;—though on what account I am ignorant.

IN CONTINUATION.

HOW shall I be able to recount the important conversation I have just had with Sir Robert Musgrave!—O my amiable, my ever dear Mrs. Ramsay, is it possible he can be in earnest in making such proposals?—My thoughts are tortured to a degree infinitely superior to those excruciating pangs felt by the wretched criminal on the painful rack.—But let me endeavour to compose my troubled thoughts, and by relating the disagreeable tete-a-tete, pour forth my complaints in the bosom of her I have always esteemed my friend,—my parent.

ON my entering the study, Sir Robert, with a look rather grave, said,—“ Be seated, Miss Beverly.”—I obeyed.—He then began as follows:—“ I sent for you, my dear, to propose an affair which may be productive of your lasting happiness.”—I bowed.—“ Nay (continued the Baronet, forcing a smile) forbear all acknowledgments till you hear what I have to offer—You are no longer a child, and therefore may be reasoned with in a manner suitable to my design:—in a word, I have had an offer of marriage proposed to me on your behalf. Nay, don’t be ashamed;”—(perceiving my countenance expressed a surprise at so premature a proposal) “ I believe, if your heart is not already engaged, (continued he, darting a scrutinizing glance) you will readily ad-

mit, when I shall have named your lover, you have no cause for any other sensations than the most perfect satisfaction.—You may remember, the first time we were at the play, both I and Lady Susan returned the compliment made to us by a gentleman in the opposite box; he it is, who through my interest, solicits your permission for an interview; to whom, in consideration of his birth and fortune, I have promised my consent. He is the only son of Sir Rowland Pembroke, and nephew, by the mother's side, to the duke of *****, who, having no children, and entertaining a great esteem for young Pembroke, an universal opinion prevails, that his fortune will be considerable from his grace, besides his father's estate, which is at this period, free of all incumbrances, four thousand pounds a year.”—Here Sir Robert stopped, to observe how I should receive the declaration; and observing by my countenance that I looked rather disgusted than rejoiced at his proposal, before I could make the answer I designed, he assumed a stern look; saying, “ You seem to treat my friendly intention with discontent, Miss Beverly!”—Oh, my more than mother! how shall I be able to proceed, and pen the cruel words uttered by Sir Robert against you, my dear, my beloved Mrs. Ramsay.—Yet I must, else you'll not know half the source of my present wretchedness.

THE unkind Baronet, with anger in his eyes, said, “ The antiquated notions you have received at Meadowfield, it is high time were removed.—The ridiculous affectation of despising the amusements practised by people in genteel life, makes you appear perfectly absurd;—it is necessary, I perceive, to remove you entirely from Mrs. Ramsay, whose narrow conceptions have almost levelled your sentiments to as low a degree of meanness as her own.—What, I suppose, (continued he, with a malicious sneer) she has preached up the pretty romantic doctrine of Love and a Cottage;—but you may be thankful that your father has made choice of me to correct such grovelling notions.”—Here I was unable

longer to refrain my tears, which fell in plenteous streams, at the unjust aspersions cast on my beloved Mrs. Ramsay.—As soon as I obtained the power of utterance, I endeavoured to remove those new-acquired sentiments in my guardian:—new indeed!—for before his union with Lady Susan, they were totally different;—he was ever bestowing the greatest (though just) praise on my amiable instructress.—The arguments I strove to enforce, at length seemed to abate something of his rigour; and by a few words that escaped him in this conversation, I learnt that her ladyship had been the principal occasion of my receiving this austere treatment from Sir Robert.—An honest declaration of my dislike to her favourite amusement, makes her regard me as an ill-bred girl, destitute of any merit.

SIR Robert, perceiving my principal affliction arose from a fear of being separated from dear Mrs. Ramsay, dropped that subject; but again desired I would give him my answer as to receiving the addresses of Mr. Pembroke. Fearing to exasperate him by a positive refusal, I faintly agreed to his desire, by saying, that I would endeavour to oblige him by seeing the gentleman, but that I could promise no farther.

HE appeared satisfied with my answer, and we then parted; Sir Robert, as I apprehend, to send a message of invitation to Mr. Pembroke, and I to my chamber, where I instantly snatched my pen, in all the hurry of distress, to acquaint my dear Mrs. Ramsay of the poignant affliction experienced by SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER VIII.

FREDERIC RAMSAY, Esq; to Captain PIERCENNEY.

INVOLVED in cruel perplexity, George!—That dæmon, Despair, with her gloomy attendants, Distrust and Jealousy, have taken fast hold of your friend. My mother has just received a letter from my charming Sylvia, who has been at London these three weeks, wherein she informs her, that she has, in compliance

with the advice, nay, command of her Guardian, consented to a visit from a gentleman, who has solicited Sir Robert to be admitted as a lover.—Heart-wounding thought!—Was it not for recollecting the reason on which Miss Beverly agrees to this interview, I should absolutely grow distracted.—Oh, Pierceney! the dear maid consents through a fear of being separated from my mother, if she refuses:—yet not even this consideration can alleviate my despondency;—the formidable Pembroke (that is his name) is blessed with every radiant smile of fortune, with birth, title, riches, and all the dazzling glitter that enchants!—while I, a poor, unnoticed wretch, (ignorant even as to the father from whom I owe my being) possess no one advantage but an honest heart, captivated with my Sylvia's infinite perfections.

THUS situated, have I the least shadow of a suitable return!—How dare I name the presumptuous thought! for though sensible that her exalted mind soars above the mean consideration of poultry wealth, yet when it is accompanied with every other desirable accomplishment, what have I not to fear?

IF I mistake not, I once saw this formidable rival, when with the late Sir Edward Beverly, at London, just before we embarked for Venice.—My recollection helps me to remember, that he appeared, at that time, a most accomplished youth.—Another stab to my distrusting thoughts!—Will not the addresses of such a man be received by her who is a competent judge of merit?—O Pierceney! I am on the rack.—Enquire concerning this happy Pembroke,—inform me of every trivial circumstance, and send me the earliest notice; that if he is ordained to be the favoured youth in my Sylvia's esteem, I may bid adieu to England;—endeavour, by absence, to alleviate my sufferings, and forget that unhappy, unmerciful passion, placed on the too charming Miss Beverly!—This I am determined on, that my presence may be no alloy to the harmony of those joys, which hearts like theirs must consequently experience.

You see, George, I am almost at the verge of despair; and on the receipt of your answer, expect I shall

bid a last farewell to my native country, in those pathetic words of Bajazet,

I'll boldly venture on some world unknown ;—
It cannot use me worse than this has done.

FREDERIC RAMSAY.

LETTER IX.

Capt. PIERCENY to F. RAMSAY, Esq.

WE'RE the immortal Shakespeare yet on earth, he might now find a second theme to employ his active genius upon, in another "Much Ado about Nothing."

EXCUSE me, Frederic,—but really I have exercised my risible faculties to a great degree,—ay, and at your expence too, Ramsay ;—why, thou art the meekest whining Enamorato I ever read of in romance—a perfect Amadis in every respect but courage—there I confess you fall short ;—though were you possessed of that also, Harry Pembroke would run no great risque from your resentment, unless, like another Drawcansir, you are for killing and slaying without asking why or wherefore?

BUT come, my poor despairing knight, I will, for the present, lay aside my raillery, and, in consideration of your manifold sufferings, compassionately tell you, that you may lay aside all thoughts of leaving Old England, and reserve that pathetic farewell of the Turkish Emperor, till another occasion.—And now for applying the most lenient balm that ever eased a wounded lover's breast.

KNOW then, that the said Mr. Pembroke and I have been long intimate ; I was to have been with him at the Play (had not business prevented) on that evening, when he first felt the powerful force of all-conquering love, that produces such wonderful effects on the trembling hearts of unresisting mortals.

THE next morning he came to me with such haste, that I really thought the blind Urchin had lent him his airy pinions, as some recompence for the wound his unerring shaft had made.—He soon informed me of his be-

ing captivated by a young lady in the same box with Sir Robert and Lady Susan Musgrave, who were attended also by two others, whom he took to be sisters.—This account made me look rather grave at that instant, I assure you, Frederic, as it quickly entered my mind, that the conquering fair could be no other than your Sylvia; and, in the height of my surprise, I could not help exclaiming—“It must be Miss Beverly!”

PEMBROKE soon caught the name, and enquired, “If I knew the lady?”—I replied, “Why, not personally, but I have heard many encomiums on her beauty, merit, and a thousand *et ceteras*.—I likewise know that she is under the guardianship of Sir Robert.”

THE enraptured Harry waited no longer than just to acquaint me, that he had known the Baronet but for a short time, having never spoke to him before his nuptials with Lady Susan; yet that he would not despair of gaining Sir Robert’s consent to visit his charming Ward.—So saying, he left me; and I saw him no more till the day following that, on which he received an invitation from the Baronet to visit your charming Sylvia in the afternoon.

NOW, Frederic, none of your heroic flights when you come to this part of my letter; nor with the resentment of an injured champion exclaim, “Can this be friendship?—when he saw and heard an open avowal of a passion for my charming maid confessed by another, and yet be silent!—Silent to him whose happiness depends on a fond expectation, that her heart may not be invaded, or even attempted by a rival!”

BUT a truce with these cavalier complaints, and hear me extenuate my seeming breach of friendship, by an excuse fraught with the most favourable sentiments on your passion.—The description you gave me in your first letter, of the charming deception of your lovely Sylvia, fully convinces me that you are far from indifferent; therefore I determined not to alarm the tranquility of your bosom by so trifling a circumstance as a rival, who, notwithstanding his possessing much merit, may waste

all his rhetoric, without making the least impression on that heart, already devoted to another.—I presume this digression from my intended theme, may suffice to excuse any seeming neglect; and therefore I will pursue my first alleviating design, which I am certain will chase all palpitations from your breast, and leave no other thoughts than what friendship and Miss Beverly may suggest.

THE morning after Pembroke's visit to his charmer he called upon me, and began the narrative as follows.—“ Why Pierceney, what a confounded blunder have I made, owing to your elogium on Miss Beverly !”—was going to demand with surprize, what he meant when he interrupted me by saying, “ Nay, cease a enquiry, and I will relate the whole affair without farther preface.

“ WITH all the expectation of an enraptured swain, I flew to the Baronet's, who soon introduced me—not to my charmer, but to one of the young ladies whom I had taken for sisters the night I was captivated at the play.—It is impossible to describe the confusion I experienced when Sir Robert advanced, saying, this, Mr. Pembroke, is Miss Beverly.—I stood as if petrified, for some moments, which occasioned infinite embarrassment in the lady ;—in short, our situation was one of the most awkward you can imagine ; and how I should have extricated myself I know not, had not Sir Robert, perceiving my perplexity, said, Did not you desire me to introduce you to Miss Beverly, sir ?—The answer I returned consisted of incoherent stammerings ;—but, however, contained enough to bring about an eclaircissement ;—for by the description I gave of the dress of my fair enslaver, when I first saw her, she proved to be the youngest daughter to the Baronet,—the charming Emily Musgrave.—I then attempted some excuse to Miss Beverly, which, notwithstanding it was delivered in the most awkward and confused terms. She deigned to receive with the greatest shew of politeness and good humour.”

WELL, Frederic, will this be sufficient to chase all desponding fears from your breast?—Though, as lovers are in general very desirous of being animated to the utmost, I can contribute yet farther to your felicity, by assuring you, your charming Sylvia will return to Meadfield in a very short time, as I have heard from Mr. Pembroke, who is now a constant visitor at the Baronet's, from whom he has received permission to pay his devoirs to his fair daughter.

FAREWEL, Ramsay—remember you are indebted to your friend for the first notice of this agreeable discovery, for which I shall expect you'll return proper acknowledgments to

GEORGE PIERCENEY.

LETTER X.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

Meadfield.

WITH what infinite satisfaction do I again date my letter from this beloved retreat!—Nothing but my Emily's society is now wanting to compleat the felicity of her friend,—but as that is impossible, I must content myself with the just reflection, that it is not given to mortals to be perfectly happy.—Admirable morality, is it not, Emily?—And now to relate an adventure after you left me and Mrs. Ramsay, at D——; a romantic phrase, you will say, but really, child, I have actually met with an affair, that, in some measure, may claim the title.—You shall hear.

WE left D—— about an hour after you and your sister:—I a little melancholy, or so, at being separated from —————, but I will proceed no farther on that topic, for fear of raising a saucy girl's vanity, which undoubtedly has been something elated already;—and well it may,—to have the accomplished Pembroke—the very Adonis of the age, sighing out the most plaintive accents at your ladyship's feet!—I have a thousand things to say of him also, Emily;—but I will first proceed with my adventure, though, perhaps, it may not prove quite

so agreeable to you, as discoursing on the handsome Harry.—However, I am determined, for once, to be perverse, and give preference to my former intention.

WHEN we had gone about two miles, and my gloom was a little subsided by the endearing converse of Mrs. Ramsay, one wheel of the chaise, on a sudden, flew off, and, as the boys drove at a smart pace, we received (as Apollo says) a pretty decent tumble.

WE, however, had no bones broken, nor any material hurt; and not being subject, as many fine ladies are, (for the sake of displaying their abundant delicacy) to fainting through fear alone, we soon quitted the vehicle, and proposed, as it was a most charming morning, to walk on till one of the boys returned to D—, and procured another chaise.

WE had not pursued our intended walk above a quarter of a mile, before we perceived Mr. Ramsay riding towards us.—As I had been apprized of this by his amiable mother, I experienced no very great emotions at the rencontro;—the worthy youth (such he really is, my friend, though not absolutely a Pembroke) would have attended his parent quite to D—, but for certain reasons,—particularly your sister Charlotte not being an Emily Musgrave.—He expressed a surprise at seeing us walking in a sequestered part of the road, and no appearance of a carriage near.—After mutual compliments, we soon informed him of our accident, at which he declared how glad he was to have met us at so critical a time; as he could conduct us to a neat cottage he had observed within a short walk, where we might rest ourselves till the chaise returned.—We approved of his proposal, and proceeded to the cot, after first ordering the other boy who remained behind, to tell his companion where to take us up; as, by Frederic's description, the rural retreat stood at a small distance from the road;—we soon reached it, and if ever artless nature could please, with what few aids the frugal hand of industry had added, here might the delighted spectator have received supreme satisfaction.

Lowly the roof, and unadorned with any other covering than a thick thatch, over which ran from the ground a curling woodbine, spreading its luxuriant sweets in the most profuse manner over the whole front of the humble dwelling, save where the inhabitants had restrained its beauteous irregularity from darkening the casements;—on each side the door was a bench, over which a rustic canopy of the same shrub, mixed with sweet briar and jessamin, alternately wove their healthy branches, by which judicious disposure a succession of perpetual fragrance is enjoyed.

We were met at the entrance by an elderly woman of a good mein, who held in her hand a lovely girl, seeming about four years old, dressed in a manner, which, though perfectly neat and plain, denoted a situation in life much higher than we expected to find in this humble mansion;—Mrs. Ramsay, with her accustomed sweetness, informed her of our accident, and begged permission to rest ourselves till the chaise arrived;—this request was instantly complied with, in all the appearance of honest sincerity, devoid of that specious shew of fawning complaisance, so often practised by the insidious great.

THE inside of the cottage (if so it might be called) was clean to a degree of elegance, but what much surprized me was, the sight of a harpsichord, which I discovered on our hostess opening a door that led to another small room, into which she went to procure us some refreshment, which she insisted on our taking with a hearty welcome. This circumstance, joined to the observation I had before made on the child's dress, contributed to my firm belief, that there was some mystery in all this, which I could not account for; though it brought to my mind, that pleasing story of Rosella and Melissa in Mrs. Rowe's Letters, which you and I, Emily, have so often read with pleasure.

THE lovely child remained with us during the short absence of _____ our hostess;—(indeed I hardly know what title to give her, therefore let this suffice,

left I do her injustice, by not bestowing one suitable to her deserts.) I took hold of the hand of the beauteous innocent, saying, "What is your name, my pretty dear?"—"Harriot, madam, (answered she, making a genteel courtesy) the same name as mamma's."—Mrs. Ramsay, Frederic, and I, now looked on each other with much surprise; and had not our hostess returned at the very instant, I believe I should have been tempted to have indulged an impertinent curiosity by farther questions.—Impertinent indeed, Emily,—for, undoubtedly, there is the greatest reason to suppose that this retirement is voluntary, and designed to glude the prying eye of inquisitive intruders.

OUR hostess, as I before said, now returned with three handsome cups of valuable china, filled with excellent chocolate, which she handed to us on a japaned waiter, on which also lay some proper rusks.—Our surprise encreased, and nothing but a fear of being deemed impertinent could have restrained me from expressing it. Mrs. Ramsay, however, asked our kind hostess if she ever came to C——, giving her at the same time a genteel invitation to Meadfield, whereby she might have it in her power to acknowledge the obligation we then laid under.—She answered, with a polite accent, "You do me honour, madam; but I shall hardly be able to accept of your obliging invitation, as we seldom go far from home."—The boys now appeared with the chaise at the bottom of the lane, therefore, with every sensation of curiosity, though not forgetting our proper acknowledgments, we were forced to leave the delightful dwelling that apparently contained so mysterious an inhabitant:—Our Hostess and little Harriot accompanied us to the chaise, and then politely took their leaves;—Frederic mounted his horse, and we set forwards, reaching Meadfield about two o'clock.—I need not tell you that the whole conversation between Mrs. Ramsay and me consisted of no other topic than our late adventure; a thousand surmises were formed to unriddle this strange concealment; and yet, perhaps, not one came near to the true cause.

THE ANCHORET.

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WHEN we were at dinner, Mrs. Ramsay asked Frederic, how he came to observe the cottage, it being (as I before said) at some distance from the high road? To which he answered, that a mere accident occasioned it, for just as he arrived at the turning which leads to this sequestered retreat, his horse started at something on the other side of the hedge, which proved to be our hostess and little Harriot gathering some wild flowers;—the beauty of the child pleased him so much, that he watched which way they went, and saw them cross a stile near the cottage, which, also, for a few minutes, engaged his attention.—And I do assure you, Emily, so much has the whole adventure engrossed many of my contemplative moments, that other affairs, perhaps of more concern, seem totally excluded.

WELL, shall I now begin with your Strephon? I think, in the beginning of my letter, I declared that I had a thousand things to say of him; but, in short, my friend, this mysterious romantic adventure has absolutely drove all other considerations from my remembrance; I shall, therefore, for the present, lay my pen aside; after, according to proper form, though at the sametime not destitute of sincerity, assured my Emily, that I remain, her affectionate

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XI.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

CERTAINLY, Sylvia, the air of —shire must have something extremely inspiring in it!—What a charming description has my dear girl given of the same rural abode. Well, Sylvia, were it not for a father, and one other male inhabitant, whom your lively imagination will soon help you to discover, I would absolutely bid adieu to this tumultuous part of the world, and fly to Meadfield, in hopes of receiving a share of its delightful influence: but, as duty binds on one hand, and—something like inclination on the other, here I shall undoubtedly stay some time longer; though yester-

day I heard Papa propose our quickly visiting Richly Park. This met with a ready approbation from the Countess and me, but it was rather objected to by our lady mother and Charlotte, who are not willing to bid adieu so soon to the rapturous employment of dear quadrille.

You know the seat of Sir Rowland Pembroke is situated within a short space of Richly Park, so that my consent may be easily accounted for;—a frank confession, you will acknowledge, Sylvia;—but hang deceit,—I never was yet guilty of it, in affairs of moment, at least. How far I might have practised it, had my Strephon (as you call him) been absolutely captivated with the real Miss Beverly, I cannot determine;—for you know, Sylvia, I could not help acknowledging him a very pretty fellow, when first I heard his desire of being admitted to you.—Had that been actually the case, and had your ladyship viewed him with the same eyes as myself, what a struggle would poor Emily have had to sustain between love and friendship:—not much in the plaintive way though, I believe.—No, no, Sylvia, females of our abundant life and spirit would have had recourse to poison or dagger, I suppose;—Why, child, we should have been Statira and Roxana in reality: mercy then on our Alexander, for a short period!—though the unhappy youth must soon have thought on extending his conquests, for his rival queens would certainly have expired by each other's hands.

WELL, it is easy to flourish on in this manner, now that the case is different, Sylvia;—and as it is extremely happy for us that it is so, I will even, for the present, drop the subject, and proceed to give you my sentiments on family affairs, which I could wish were otherwise.

I assure you, my friend, the conduct of Lady Susan is not, in my opinion, correspondent to what, (spite of my volatile disposition) I think, ought to be observed in the matrimonial state. A continued round of dissipation seems to engross her whole thoughts; and I am

sorry to add, that the character of Lady Townly would receive but a poor compliment in being compared to the gay Lady Susan:—the principal foible of the former, consisting only in a too great love of play; whereas the latter, not confined to that alone, betrays in her every look and action, an inordinate desire of admiration, from every man who addresses her with the commonplace gallantry of the age.

I HAVE frequently thought on that circumstance which so much alarmed the Countess, when you alone were with her.—I believe, notwithstanding I esteem her as a most amiable woman, that she was at that instant guilty of disingenuity.—No likeness to a deceased brother could occasion such emotions, Sylvia! what the real cause could be, I dare not pretend to imagine, that it was but something of which Lady Susan was no stranger, I am convinced:—however, I believe it was a principal reason of your receiving your greatest desire in again returning to Meadfield; for by an observation I made both on the behaviour of the mother and the daughter, I am inclined to think, a fear of your mentioning that circumstance to Papa, made Lady Susan appear a strenuous advocate for your leaving London; though before she had expressed the greatest sorrow for the contracted grovelling notions (as she termed them) you had received from our dear Mrs. Ramsay's tuition. Something mysterious in all this, no doubt.—I apprehend we shall have infinite matter whereon to exercise our pens, Sylvia;—though I am fearful you will not be entertained so much by a solution of those transactions in London, as I shall be from your rural affairs.—Indeed, my sweet friend, I begin to fear greatly for the future tranquility of Papa; who, if I mistake not, becomes already sensible of the imprudence of his lady's conduct, which, I believe, is a principal reason for his proposing our so early visiting Richly Park, in hopes that retirement from the intoxicating round of dissipated pleasure, may put a stop to those irregularities he begins to dread.

CHARLOTTE is an immense favourite with her la-

dyship, as she appears enraptured with the same love of gay delights; while your Emily is regarded as an insipid mortal; and their chief surprize (as my sister told me this morning, with an envious sneer) consists in contemplating how a man of Mr. Pembroke's accomplishments, could be enamoured of a girl like me, possessing no one requisite advantage to make a figure in the beau monde.— Poor Charlotte!—how has Envy, with its corrosive venom, spread its malignant influence over her:—now would I say, I pity her; but, as even my Sylvia might imagine on the present occasion, that that word would indicate the leading step to contempt, I shall forbear—having too much regard for my sister, (spite of her little foibles) to suffer that word to be construed in so mean a sense.

FAREWEL, Sylvia, receive my promise of being informed with every thing material that happens here; and I desire you will remember to impart whatever comes within your knowledge at Meadfield:—particularly, if a discovery should be made respecting the sequestered inhabitants at the romantic cottage, I hope you will contribute to my satisfaction, by sending the earliest notice, to your EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XII.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

LEAVE not my Emily accusè me of neglect, till she hears the reason for my not writing sooner; indeed, my dear girl, your Sylvia's time has been principally engrossed by administering all the relief in her power to afflicted innocence. What! more adventures! you will ask:—even so, my friend. And as I now intend to make ample recompence for my long silence, I would advise you to summon all your patience; for, in truth, you will need it, in the perusal of the whole of this long detail.

THE day after I received your last letter, Mrs. Ramsay, Frederic, and I, proposed walking to N——, a

pleasant village about two miles distant, at which place resides a worthy clergyman, named Nugent, who till lately dwelt at C——, but left that place to be nearer to the church where he has performed duty these five-and-twenty years, without receiving farther reward for an infinite share of merit, than being yet an humble curate, his whole income amounting, at this time, to no more than thirty pounds per annum; with which poor pittance, he himself, (who is a widower) one daughter, and a little son, appear to possess more real plenty, than thousands of splendid beings, who roll in all the pomp of loaded luxury.

To this worthy man, and his no less worthy daughter, our visit was intended; as, during their residence at C——, they were the only family with whom Mrs. Ramsay was intimate.

We were received with every mark of social hospitality, joined to a behaviour in both truly engaging;—good tea, brown bread, and excellent butter, made by the amiable Peggy herself, composed our repast,—the whole of which was crowned with a glass of currant wine, which the worthy man assured us was the produce of his own garden, and the joint labour of him and his daughter.

OH! Emily! how could I expatiate on the happy tranquility that was visible in this little family?—Here all was harmony, all was serene; no envious words, or (if we may judge by the countenance) even thoughts arose, to damp the supreme felicity they enjoyed:—But I must forbear farther comment, lest I tell my epistle to a much larger degree than even my first intent.—Therefore to continue:

We left N—— early in the evening, attended by Mr. Nugent, who walked the first mile with us, and politely took his leave, after a promise of returning our visit soon; we then proceeded to Meadfield, which we reached in about half an hour,—but it being a most delightful evening I was inclined to take a second ramble.

FREDERIC observed my desire, and, with all the

humility of delicate friendship, proposed accompanying me to a pleasant copse he knew I was ever fond of, especially by moonlight; which, by this time, appeared with all its silver charms.—Mrs. Ramsay declared herself too much fatigued to attend us, so that I even ventured myself alone with my swain to the before mentioned place, which is hardly a mile from the house.—We walked on, discoursing on general topics, for I do assure you, Emily, notwithstanding this was undoubtedly a most favourable opportunity for tender subjects, I must do the youth the justice to declare, that he has strictly adhered to my absolute commands given in the arbor;—therefore I have received no other avowal of his passion, than what his eyes frequently betray; and, as I cannot prohibit him the free use of those intelligent organs, I am obliged to bear their expressive declarations without murmuring or rebuke.

BUT now I wander from my first design;—it is well I have engaged your patience, Emily, otherwise you would certainly throw from your hand this tedious harangue; condemn me for my insignificant digressions, and not give yourself the trouble of knowing the sequel.—But now receive my promise of being as concise as possible.—Well then, we reached the aforesaid copse, which leads to a private road from a few scattering hamlets.

HERE we walked for some time, enjoying the serenity of the evening, and descanting with philosophic rhetoric on the beauty of the firmament, which now appeared with dazzling splendor, and occasioned me to remember that admirable description in Pope's Homer, of the rising of the moon. The recollection of which, even at this moment, is so forcibly impressed on my imagination, that notwithstanding my promise of no farther interruption, I cannot help transcribing the descriptive eloquence of our justly admired translator.

As when the Moon, resplendent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's clear azure spreads her sacred light,

When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene ;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole ;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head :
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies ;
The conscious swains, admiring at the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

THIS enchanting scene so engrossed (nay, let me not be ashamed to add—so religiously engaged) our attention, that we remained totally unconcerned at the approach of night, till the clock from a neighbouring steeple struck ten.—Now roused from our delightful reverie, and fearing Mrs. Ramsay might be anxious for our return, we began with hasty steps to leave the copse, but no sooner had we reached the stile at the entrance, than we were alarmed with a rustling in the bushes near us, and, before I could express my surprise, a woman neatly dressed rushed from one of the embowered paths, seeming to be pursued, and fell senseless at my feet.

FREDERIC, amazed at the incident, proposed entering the copse again, in pursuit of a man he had seen following the distressed female; but I entreated him to stay, and help me to revive, if possible, the unhappy sufferer, who seemed to demand our utmost assistance; this he readily agreed to, but it was near half an hour before she gave any other sign of life, than a convulsive motion in her stomach, which greatly alarmed us;—at length she began to shew some symptoms of recovery:—I had seated myself on a rising part of the ground, and supporting her languid head on my lap, when we were again thrown into a consternation by several voices, one of which uttered, “ It must be this way, I am sure we shall find them.”

IT was now, Emily, that my courage was tried to the utmost;—a thousand apprehensions rushed into my af-

frighted thoughts;—all the dreadful accounts I had heard of, now entered my brain;—rapes, murders, and every horrid idea, obtruded themselves on my imagination.

Poor Frederic observed my dilemma, and with the soothing powers of eloquence endeavoured to compose me; but I really believe his utmost efforts would have proved ineffectual, and I, in a short space, should have been in the same situation with her I supported, had not Mr. Ramsay, after listening a few moments, said to me, “ My dear Miss Beverly, dismiss your fears; I now plainly hear Jenny’s voice, who, I imagine, is sent by my mother in search of us.”—He was right in his conjecture, the honest girl now advanced, attended by a neighbouring farmer’s son, whom she had hindered from going as early to bed as usual, that he might accompany her to the copse.

Mr. Ramlay now called her by her name, to which she answered, “ O! dear Sir, I am glad I have found you; my mistress is very uneasy that you should stay so long; but where is Miss Beverly, Sir?”—I had, by this time, pretty well recovered myself, and therefore answered, “ Here am I, Jenny; safe enough, thank heaven;—though I was rather in doubt of it some minutes ago.”—I then, in as brief a manner as possible, related our adventure, and desired her assistance in helping up our afflicted stranger, who was now so far recovered as to walk a little, leaning on my arm on one side, and on Jenny’s on the other.—We dispatched the young farmer immediately, bidding him make what haste he could to Mrs. Ramsay, and to inform her of the whole affair;—desiring that a bed might be prepared for the stranger.—She heard the order, and gently pressing my hand, said, “ My sweet young lady you are all goodness, but I cannot, as I would, express my gratitude.” Both Frederic and I begged her to forbear all acknowledgments, and we continued with slow pace to proceed homewards; yet ere we had walked a hundred yards, we were met by the humane Mrs. Ramsay herself, the

young farmer we had sent back, and another man, who brought an easy chair, into which the stranger being placed, was safely conveyed home, where she was instantly put to bed, and every means used for her recovery:—Jenny, by Mrs. Ramsay's orders, sat up with her; and the next morning being able to arise, she desired our company, that we might be informed who she was; who had so imminently experienced our humanity:—Mrs. Ramsay and I obeyed the summons, and on our entering the chamber, beheld our lovely guest;—such indeed she appeared,—her form graceful to a degree of elegance,—her countenance expressing infinite sensibility,—which, joined to features extremely regular, and a fine complexion, made her, upon the whole, capable of creating esteem at first sight.

SHE received us with an engaging politeness; expressed her acknowledgments with all the gratitude of protected innocence; and then proposed to inform us of her story, which you may be assured met with no opposition.—We had seated ourselves for that purpose, when, behold Emily, one of Mrs. Ramsay's poor patients now came to receive some lenient remedy from the hand of our worthy doctress; so that we were obliged to defer hearing the fair stranger's history at that time; and we have had the affliction to be deprived of it still longer, by her being seized that very evening with a high fever, which has continued near a fortnight, with many dangerous symptoms; but through the humane tenderness of Mrs. Ramsay, and some of our fair stranger's friends, (whom I shall introduce at a convenient opportunity) she is now entirely out of danger, though she still continues very weak; therefore I must speak patience to my curiosity for some time longer, before I can expect to learn the desired narrative: but be assured, Emily, it shall no sooner come to my knowledge, than you may expect a recital of it, from

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XIII.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

NO more shall London, my Sylvia, be stiled the busy world:—why here I am surrounded, it is true, by numbers of—how shall I call them?—only living puppets, destitute of any atchievements, except an insipid round of the self-same dull pursuits;—dressing, visiting, card-playing, and—scandal,—are the only employments in this great metropolis;—while you, like a female Quixote, are ever finding out adventures new and amazing, experiencing more novelty in what is esteemed a retired and obscure part of the kingdom, than I, engaged in the tumultuous capital.—You have scarce been a month absent from London, and two adventures already! both of which seem to promise infinite entertainment and variety.—Well, Sylvia, I would fain be with you, but that is impossible:—however, should the neighbourhood of Richly Park afford but a small share of that diversity we so much want in town, depend on it I will be even with you;—adventure for adventure then, my friend; and if this should be the case—why our letters may be worth some money to the proprietors of circulating libraries—for by the help of a little fertile invention, they might supply the town with Novels for a twelvemonth, at least.—But a truce with this bagatelle;—you see, Sylvia, want of subject occasions me to scribble on without the least pretension to amusement or instruction.—Well, then, as I have little to offer on my own account, permit me to make a few remarks on your ladyship's letter—and to begin with your second ramble to the — copse, I think you stile it. Why certainly, Sylvia, you were willing to try the utmost of your swain's obedience;—a walk by moonlight,—only you and he present—gracious!—what a temptation for him to begin breathing forth the tender vows of a submissive adorer.—I apprehend the fair stranger was not attended by so delicate a lover, otherwise,

it is probable, she would not have stood in need of your assistance.—But I can proceed no farther now, Sylvia, as I have this instant received a summons to attend old Mrs. Whateley, and her two formal daughters, in the drawing-room, who have graciously vouchsafed to pay us a morning visit.—Absolute frights, Sylvia;—but the laws of good breeding will oblige me to make one of my best curtseys, and say, “I am extremely glad to see you, ladies”—and so forth.—Adieu, my dear girl, I will return as soon as possible.

THANK my stars, Sylvia, I am again reseated in the posture from which the agreeable ladies interrupted me. Well, I will now endeavour to amuse you, by giving you an account of this delightful visit.

WHEN I entered the drawing-room, up rose the venerable matron, with profound dignity, saying, “How does Miss Emily Musgrave? I sincerely hope I see her well.” These few words were uttered with all that tedious drawl of syllables for which Sir Anthony Branville is so peculiarly distinguished.—Miss Sarah, (the eldest) who, I believe, may be now drawing towards forty.—Craning up her enormous scraggy neck, and ever willing to copy from her inimitable Mama,—accosted me in terms partly similar; but Miss Becky, who particularly values herself upon her sprightliness, though but a year or two younger than her sister, said, “La, Miss Emily, why was you not at Soho last Thursday?—well, I protest it was the most charming night there has been the whole season.—Such an infinite deal of company, *good* company, I mean;—no awkward cits amongst us;—but Lord Shallow, Lord Dicelove, Sir John Racquet and Lady, the two Miss Rambles, and in short, a thousand more I cannot remember.”—“Ay, ay, my dear, interrupted her sage mama, (with an attempt to be uncommonly satirical) and Mr. Pembroke too,—you forgot him, Becky.”—“O bless me, (answered Becky) so I did;—I remember we were all surprised at seeing him there without Miss Emily Musgrave.”—Here did

the poor antiquated virgin, with a pretty affected giggle that would have become the age of fifteen, endeavour to display her engaging vivacity in its greatest perfection, which I contributed to heighten, by saying, with an obliging smile, "I am certain Mr. Pembroke could desire no addition to his satisfaction, since the two amiable Miss Whatelys graced the assembly."—O Flattery! Flattery! how forcible are thy charms!—Will you believe me, Sylvia, this speech, though directed to two such reverses of the word *amiable*, seemed to elevate the maidens considerably:—Miss Sarah, with an affected half smile, casting her lovely eyes on the ground, said, "O Miss Musgrave, you are so polite"—while Becky's seemed ready to start from her head with pleasure; who, catching hold of my hand, exclaimed, "When, my dear Miss Emily, shall we be favoured with your company to play a pool at quadrille?—Well, I long to see you in G——street."—But the chocolate being now brought in, the lively nymph was hindered from proceeding.

I FORGOT to tell you, Sylvia, that I had the happiness of this enchanting conversation to myself;—Lady Susan and Charlotte being gone to make a few purchases at B——'s auction room.—Do not you envy me so desirable an entertainment?—undoubtedly:—is not this far preferable to all your pretty romantic affairs?—Well, I will continue, that I may raise your envy still farther, child.—After the amiable ladies had sipped their chocolate, with all the delicacy so natural to them, Mrs. Whately looked at her watch, saying, "Bless me, it is almost One o'clock;—dear Miss Musgrave, oblige me so far as to present my compliments to Lady Susan and Miss Charlotte, and assure them how infinitely glad I shall be to see them before they leave town."—Then turning to her daughters, she said,—“Come, children, we must bid Miss Musgrave adieu, after first informing her of our earnest hopes, that we shall see her also.”—So saying, we all rose with abundant decorum, and the ladies made their exits in proper form, the ve-

erable matron first, then Miss Sarah, and Becky next; who, on leaving the room, again snatched my hand, saying, "Do, my dear creature, let us see you soon." This tender epithet I impute to that cordial drop of flattery before mentioned;—nay, when they were seated in the coach, the youngest lady looked up to the window where I was standing, and kissed her hand, with all the affectionate transport that a long friendship might inspire,—though I believe six times are the most I have ever had the honour of seeing them.

HEARTILY glad was I when they drove from the door, upon which I instantly returned to my former employment, and have endeavoured to amuse my Sylvia by a description of this improving conversation: yet so very a churl am I to such polite chit-chat, that I would rather hear your romantic adventures, than all the spirited things possible to be uttered by the amiable ladies above-mentioned:—a fine compliment you will acknowledge, Sylvia.—Well, I will now proceed with my remarks.—Bless me, (as Becky says) interrupted again.—Just this moment is Lady Susan and Charlotte returned from the auction, upon which I suppose I shall be summoned down to observe some pretty nick-nacks they have purchased.—Even so, Sylvia,—therefore, once more farewell; as by the time that I have bestowed proper encomiums on the baubles, I must think of changing my dress against the dinner; or, to speak in more elegant and polite terms,—sacrifice to the Graces.

I NEED not desire you will send the earliest notice concerning your fair guest, as you have before promised that satisfaction, to your EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XIV.

From the same, to the same.

Tuesday Evening, 11 o'Clock.

O H! my sweet friend, little did I think, when I concluded this morning, that I should again re-

fume my pen so soon. Alas, Sylvia, something material has happened between Papa and Lady Susan,—but what remains as yet a secret from your Emily.

WHEN I went down stairs to view the purchase she had made at the auction, her ladyship appeared full of spirits, and shewed me many valuable trinkets; among which was an elegant gold etwee, most beautifully chased:—while I was admiring it, I observed her ladyship look at Charlotte, and give her a significant wink; this did not escape my notice,—yet, as I never appear inquisitive to know their secrets, I seemed not to regard the innuendo, but continued praising the workmanship, and the instruments, which are in reality very elegant.

THE Countess, hearing no one was present but ourselves, now entered the room, and joined with me in admiring this bauble.—Presently after Papa knocked at the door; upon which Lady Susan, on a sudden, snatched it from her mother's hand, and hastily put it in her pocket. On Papa's entering the room, he appeared greatly ruffled; which he, however, seemed willing to hide from every one present but his lady, upon whom he visibly darted severe frowns. The Countess, I am certain, perceived it, yet notwithstanding she thought it most prudent to withdraw: I followed her ladyship's example, and retired to my dressing-room.—Charlotte soon came to me, saying, as she entered the room, “Heavens! Emily, what can be the reason of Papa's seeming anger to Lady Susan?”—“Nay, (answered I) why this question to me, Charlotte? you are sensible I am an entire stranger to her Ladyship's secrets,—if I had been inclined to inquisitiveness, I should have demanded that of you, who are so much honoured with her private thoughts.”—“Secrets and private thoughts, (repeated Charlotte hastily) Do you think her Ladyship has any but what she cared not if all the world knew?—I would be glad to know, Child, what you can mean by such insinuations!”

THE appellation of *Child* nettled me a good deal, I assure you, Sylvia; for I am not quite so fond of that en-

dearly epithet as the juvenile Miss Whatelys are, who, when their venerable mama bestowed that title on them in the morning, seemed absolutely delighted.

Piqued at the scornful manner also with which the whole speech was uttered, I replied tartly, "that as to my meaning, it should remain in my own breast, since, were I to declare my sentiments, I believe they would not redound to the credit either of her Ladyship or herself."

CHARLOTTE now seemed unwilling to enter into farther debate, but hastily left the room, saying something, in a low voice, about letting her Ladyship know what an elevated opinion I entertained of her conduct. But as I am utterly negligent as to her Ladyship's esteem or value for me, I troubled myself no farther than a fear for Papa's happiness; which, as I have before declared, I am greatly apprehensive of.

I WAS no sooner dressed than Hawley, the Countess's woman, rapped softly at my door, and informed me dinner was served,—upon which I hastened down, but was surprised to hear Mr. Dennison say grace, and Lady Susan not present. I however made no inquiry, fearing some fracas had happened that occasioned her Ladyship's absence.

THE Countess, Papa, Charlotte, and I seemed as if we had sworn to observe constant silence;—not a dozen words, I am sure, passed the whole time at dinner:—Mr. Dennison, once indeed, just before the cloth was removed, ventured to ask Papa's opinion on the last debates in the House of Commons; but the worthy man was soon silenced, by receiving for answer, "Indeed, Mr. Dennison, disagreeable circumstances in private life, occasion such debates as are truly perplexing, therefore I have little leisure to think on those of a more public nature."

CHARLOTTE reddened at this speech, and appeared greatly disconcerted, which Papa observing, he looked steadfastly on her without speaking, but shook his head with every symptom of visible discontent.

THE Countess sat in a fixed thoughtfulness, while the big tear seemed ready to steal down her cheek, which sight, I assure you, Sylvia, affected me considerably; justly supposing her gay daughter's conduct was the reason of her ladyship's uneasiness:—in short, the whole company would have presented, to an unconcerned spectator, a perfect groupe of discontented mortals.—How this affair may end I cannot say, but, I apprehend, we shall soon bid adieu to London; therefore, my Sylvia may, in all probability, receive my next letter from Richly Park.

I HAVE not seen Lady Susan since the morning, but believe Charlotte has been closeted with her the whole evening.—The Countess also retired soon after dinner, so that your Emily was quite deserted; therefore not chusing to go out, I amused myself at the harpsichord till near eight, when I received a visit from Mr. Pembroke;—and who does my Sylvia think accompanied him?—A gentleman, to whose name at least you are no stranger,—he being a friend and male confidant, I find, to F. R. Esq;—a formidable red coat, I assure you, Sylvia,—appearing with all the enchanting embellishments of an air *bien degagée*, which, joined to a handsome face and form, composed the whole person of—Captain George Pierceney.—Certainly my swain must be perfectly sure of my heart, else he would never have ventured to introduce this dangerous son of Mars into my company.

I WAS seated at the harpsichord when they entered, and chanting away some trifling affair;—but, on opening the door, I heard the servant say, “Mr. Pembroke and Capt. Pierceney.”—Up jumped I, in order to receive my visitors, who both began in one moment to beg, pray, and so forth, that they might not interrupt me;—therefore I reseated myself, and flourished away, “O! had I Jubal's lyre, &c.”—The song finished, we chatted on various subjects for near two hours; the Gents then took their leave, and soon after Papa came home from Colonel Macclesfield's, where he went after

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dinner.—We supped alone, and then, by his order, I returned again to the harpsichord, endeavouring, by every means in my power, to alleviate his visible dependency.—At eleven we parted, when I instantly sat down to acquaint my Sylvia of the whole mysterious transactions of the day:—a poor entertainment, I fear, you will think it;—but what may succeed I know not, pray heaven it may prove better than I at this time imagine.—*Bon* *fair*, my sweet friend; even delightful employments may sometimes grow irksome, the truth of which I this instant experience, for though nothing is capable of giving me greater pleasure than writing to your ladyship, yet frail nature requiring rest, will be often impertinently troublesome; and, as I at present feel the force of the old dame's impulse, must forbear farther scribbling at this time; therefore once more good night, from

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XV.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

NOW, Emily, for my promise. The whole mystery is unravelled, and our fair guest has enabled me to satisfy the curiosity of my friend; which, I apprehend, will prove more satisfactory than the most judicious remarks on your two last letters, notwithstanding they have afforded me that entertainment, which your diffidence would not suffer you to allow; particularly your lively description of the Mrs. and Miss Whatelys. But I will now leave the incomparable triumvirate, and proceed with my single heroine.—When she was able to go through the whole detail of her life and adventures, (which name you will acknowledge they deserve) Mrs. Ramsay and I attended in the chamber; and being seated, our lovely stranger, after infinite acknowledgments, began as follows:

“ YOU see before you, ladies, a person who has experienced, perhaps, the greatest variety of misfortunes, disappointments, and, in short, every other per-

plexing sport of fortune, that the inhabitants of this sublunary globe are capable of sustaining :—born to affluence and independance, I have felt the severity of an adverse fate, and often been obliged to bear those scoffs which patient merit takes of the unworthy. Think not that I mean by these last words, to insinuate, that my conduct has been entirely irreproachable ;—far from it; I cannot boast so near a degree to perfection: yet I must at the same time declare, (void of partiality even to myself) that the misfortunes I have sustained have been more than equal to my foibles, and rather owing to a capricious world, than brought upon myself through any heinous indiscretions. Yet let me not trespass on your patience by this needless preface; but, by a candid declaration, submit the merits of my cause; fondly hoping, that my amiable auditors will find more in my history to pity than condemn.

“ THOUGH for some years past I have been an inhabitant of England, I am, by birth, a native of Spain; the city of Segovia was the place wherein I drew my first breath;—my father, Don Juan, (if, alas! he yet survives) is of an ancient and opulent family; and, by my mother’s side, I might boast an affinity to some of the most dignified grandees of the kingdom; but alas! all these considerations I have found, by melancholy experience, have availed me little, since utter neglect has been my constant attendant, when plunged into deep distress; not principally through my own crimes, but, (as I have before observed) through the caprice of others.—My father, though a Spaniard by birth, having spent a great part of his juvenile years in France, Italy, and England, had, before his marriage, lived in a more gay and dissipated manner, than is consistent with the customs and dispositions of his native country; and as people commonly fly from unbounded extravagance to abject covetousness, thus in disposition was Don Juan, who, when married and settled in Spain, became the most jealous husband, and afterwards the most rigid father; carrying his vigilance, and suspicion of his fa-

mily honour to such an height, that he is mentioned as a common proverb; the people often saying, when they would describe an extreme jealousy—*O! He is a second Don Juan D'Alcarez!*—In short, he exceeded even the natural moroseness of a Spaniard, which occasioned my mother to lead a most unhappy life, and was, undoubtedly, the fatal shortening of her days; for before I reached my seventh year she died, with manifest signs of what is in general esteemed a broken heart.

“ As I was the only child, my father loved me to a degree the most exquisite, and to this excessive fondness may I date my every woe; since, by the loss of my affectionate mother, his whole fears, and uncontrouled jealousy now centered on me alone: these, while I remained an infant, were productive of small concern, but as I advanced in years, occasioned me much uneasiness; though I will not dwell on the various incidents which composed many unhappy hours,—(such as confinement from innocent amusements,—the surly treatment from morose Duennas,—and a thousand other disagreeable matters, the consequences of my father's continual suspicions) but come to the particular circumstance that preceded my future misery.

“ BEFORE I attained my seventeenth year, Don Juan had received many considerable offers, on my behalf, in respect to marriage; one of which he seemed willing to accept:—this was from a grandee of the same city, called Don Lopez D'Ossuna. His only son, Pedro, on whose account the offer was made, was then at Madrid, yet the affair was soon settled between the fathers, though the children had never seen each other. But, by an implicit obedience I had ever been accustomed to, I no sooner heard Don Juan's proposal, than I dutifully promised to acquiesce with his commands,—so that they only waited Pedro's arrival to bring this union to bear.

“ ONCE, indeed, I just hinted, in the presence of Don Lopez, a probability of his son's not viewing me with so much partiality as he was pleased to honour me

with.—He answered my doubt with a compliment; though, at the same time, he appeared too much of a Spaniard to think of his son's disputing his commands, or thwarting his desire.

“ THINGS were in this situation, and Pedro’s arrival was expected every day, when an accident, I shall ever remember, shook the basis of my promised obedience, and was the leading step to those misfortunes I afterwards experienced.

“ ONE afternoon, having obtained permission to go to Vespers with my Duenna, just before we came to the church, a young gentleman was riding a pretty smart pace up the street we were then crossing,—when I happened to slip, and fell near his horse’s feet; so that had he not, by a skilful management, checked the rapidity of the beast in an instant, I had been undoubtedly destroyed;—and may the Almighty Disposer of events pardon the wish I have often made, which is, that that moment had been my last; as then I should have died in a state of perfect innocence, and not have experienced the many afflictions which succeeded that fatal day: But it was the unchangeable decree of Omnipotence that I should survive, and feel the force of his avenging rod.”

HERE, my Emily, was the beauteous Spaniard obliged to give a vent to those tears, occasioned by a recollection, which greatly moved both Mrs. Ramsay and me; she, however, soon recovered herself, made an apology for her involuntary interruption, and then continued thus:

“ THE fright this accident threw me into was very violent, so that, for a few moments, I was unable to rise; upon which the stranger jumped from his horse, and assisted my Duenna in my recovery, with such obliging attention, as, in one short interval, both charmed and conquered me.—My Duenna proposed our returning home, but as the church was near, I seemed desirous to enter that, saying, by the time service was over, I should be much more able to proceed home,

than I then found myself; she approved my intention and we entered the sacred portal.—But how was I agreeably surprised and delighted, when, in a few minutes after, I perceived the stranger had placed himself directly opposite to me, and by many expressive glances, raised a hope in my young inexperienced heart, that I was not disagreeable to him. For here let me confess, that an earnest desire, a fond expectation, that the handsome cavalier would follow us into the church, was a more prevailing argument for my going thither, than the reason I assigned;—so quick a progress did the fatal passion occasion.

“ DURING the time we remained there, my whole thoughts were employed in a kind of pleasing delirium, from which I was at length roused by the service being concluded, which then seemed the shortest I ever remembered.

“ ON our return home, Don Juan accosted me, by saying, ‘ Well, Clara, I have joyful news for thee;—this letter informs me, that the young D’Ossuna will arrive in less than a week, and then shall I bid adieu to all my anxious fears on thy account, by delivering thee to a husband’s care.’—These words now wounded like so many daggers, but yet I had the prudence to hide my perturbation, by saying as usual, ‘ You may depend on my obedience, Sir.’—I then hastened to my chamber, attended by my female Argus, who, as I imagined, watched my every look, therefore I was obliged to appear as unconcerned as possible. I proposed going to Vespers again the next evening, being impatient to behold once again the handsome Chevalier, who, I doubted not, would be there also.—I obtained my desire in going to church, but was greatly deceived and mortified in not perceiving him, on whose account my devotion was feigned.—Chagrined at this disappointment, when the service was ended we again were returning home, I, full of the most disagreeable sensations, and reflecting in anxious doubts concerning the absence of the stranger; when a woman, meanly though neatly dressed, accosted

me in bad *Spanish*, saying, ‘ You have dropped your handkerchief fair Lady,’—and held one in her hand:—But I, being peevish through disappointed expectation, answered, ‘ No, no, it is not mine.’—Upon which, fixing her eyes in an expressive manner full against mine, she said, with much energy—‘ It is indeed;’—the earnestness with which these words were uttered, occasioned me to regard, with attention, the person who spoke them;—but, good heavens! what were my emotions, when I discovered my handsome Chevalier under this disguise!—My presence of mind, however, did not forsake, (nor imprudence either) for feeling in my pocket I said, ‘ It is mine indeed, good woman;—there is for your honesty:’—So saying, I took the handkerchief, and, gave him a half pistole, which he received, with manifest signs of thankfulness, and then left us.

“ THIS adventure was a powerful spur to my haste, for I walked so fast, that my Duenna (who, I am certain, suspected nothing) could hardly keep pace with me; and the first opportunity I had, I examined the handkerchief, justly supposing that it contained something of more consequence than itself.—I was not deceived, for on opening it, out dropped a billet, folded in a small compass, and in it was as follows:

“ THE constant and cruel restriction with which my lovely Donna Clara is ever surrounded, makes me obliged to adopt an innocent stratagem, to inform her who it is that wears her chains with pleasure.—Know then, my Angelic Conqueror, I am by birth of France, and of fortune and family sufficiently dignified to claim an alliance with Don Juan D’Alcarez:—But Oh! torture to my thoughts, I find, on enquiry, that thou art destined to make another the happiest of mortals—and that soon.—Forbid it every fond desire!—Exert that compassion which dwells in thy gentle bosom, and do not, by a too implicit obedience, (even to a father’s command) contribute to render miserable the future life of

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

‘ P. S. May I hope you will be at Vespers to-morrow, where I intend being in the habit of a Peasant, to elude the prying eyes of your Duenna.’

WITH this letter, Emily, must I, for the present, conclude, as I have just received a summons to dinner; therefore I advise you to suspend your curiosity for a short time, when you shall receive farther intelligence from

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

IN CONTINUATION.

A MOST arduous task have I imposed on myself, that is certain, Emily, and all to satisfy an inquisitive girl’s curiosity; when I shall be able to go through the whole of the fair Spaniard’s history, I know not; I received such infinite satisfaction in the recital, that I apprehended I could write the detail with equal pleasure; but I find there is a material difference between a verbal information, and the tedious progression of pen and ink: however, as you know I was always tenacious of keeping my promise, I am determined to go through the whole, although I should declare against scribbling any more for a twelvemonth.—Now then attend, and imagine it is the fair Clara, who speaks as follows:

“ TO describe the various emotions with which my bosom laboured at reading the letter, is impossible;—the conquest Beaumont had before gained, was by this declaration of his love now immovably fixed; yet, for a short time, the several contending passions of fear, duty, and affection by turns reigned, each striving for superiority. But the powerful force of the little Deity obtained an entire victory, and I was at length determined to sustain the utmost of my father’s rigour, rather than marry Pedro, whom, though I had never seen him, my imagination now painted in the most disagreeable light.

“ THUS resolved, my imprudence rose with my undutiful resolution; I broke through that reserve so strictly enjoined on all females, more particularly of my own

country, and wrote an answer to my lover, which I intended, if possible, to give him at Vespers, and which I prevailed on my duenna to accompany me.

" WHEN we entered the church I soon discovered Beaumont in his disguise, and found an opportunity to drop the note, unperceived by any one but himself who snatched it from the ground, put it hastily into his bosom, and gave me, at the same time, a look of the utmost tenderness: he then mixed with the promiscuous multitude.

" As you may be desirous, Ladies, (continued Donna Clara) to know the purport of this inconsiderate billet, I will repeat the contents, though it must fill you with a just disdain at my ridiculous indiscretion;—but let youth and inexperience, joined to a prepossession in favour of so deserving a lover, (as Beaumont really appeared) plead for me, and be a means of extenuating the imprudence I acknowledge myself guilty of.—The words, to the best of my remembrance, were these:

' NOT used to dissemble, let this assure the Chevalier de Beaumont, that the marriage proposed by my father with Don Pedro d'Offuna, was never so much approved by his unhappy daughter as he had reason to expect from my obedience;—but, alas! that which before Tuesday appeared at most but disagreeable, is now thought on with every symptom of disgust and horror. Yet the too amiable Beaumont may rest assured, that the dreaded union shall never take place;—since I am determined to venture even the loss of a parent's affection, and face his utmost resentment, rather than hazard making him miserable who is already but too agreeable, to

CLARA D'ALVAREZ.'

" THE day after this inconsiderate action, (continued our fair Spaniard) the dreaded Pedro arrived, attended by his father, on whose brow there appeared visible signs of angry discontent. His son also betrayed no lover's impatience at the sight of me, who was introduced as his intended bride.

" As both of us were supposed to be fully apprized with the intentions of our parents, my father soon took

Don Lopez aside, and then left the room in which we were together.

"WE sat for a few minutes in a profound silence, and, as it afterwards proved, employed in thoughts equally similar, the affections of both being fixed on very different objects than ourselves. At length Pedro, after regarding me for some time with a fixed attention, broke silence by saying,—I am sensible, charming Dona Clara, the honest declaration I am going to make is what you will hardly expect, when you consider the reason for which I am now introduced to you. My father has ordered me,—nay, it is his absolute command, that I should offer you my heart;—but——Here he seemed to hesitate, as unwilling to proceed;—when I, being more delighted with this beginning than any other he could have made, tho' couched in the most rapturous strains, begged him to continue,—expressing myself with such manifest symptoms of satisfaction, that Pedro, gaining courage by my behaviour, went on:—Your apparent love of sincerity, fair Clara, which is visible by an obliging desire that I should proceed, has chased all fear of offending.—I will now honestly confess, notwithstanding your beauty and merit, another has possession of that heart, which my father insists I should offer to you.—He would then have made many apologies, and begged my pardon for this frank declaration,—but I stopped him by assuring him, that nothing he could farther say would give me any satisfaction comparable to his candid acknowledgment of a prior engagement of his affections,—and then, in return, I acquainted him with my prepossession in favour of Beaumont, at which he appeared highly pleased. In short, this meeting was attended with more agreeable circumstances than we had either of us expected; we commended each other for our frank confessions, and came to an agreement, that, to deceive our parents, we should seem entirely to approve their designs in regarding each other with mutual affection, by which means a free intercourse might subsist (by the help of Pedro)

between me and the Chevalier. This, on my side, might easily be effected, Don Juan having no suspicion of a prior engagement entertained by me.

" PEDRO indeed informed me, that he had acknowledged to his father his having been captivated with a lady at Madrid, as soon as he heard the proposal of his addressing me; at which Don Lopez had been greatly irritated, which was the reason of his appearing with such visible marks of anger and discontent, when he introduced his son, as they had had a warm altercation concerning it before they left home. He, however, seemed confident of deceiving his father, and declared he would make a merit of his obedience, and occasion the old Don to believe that an implicit acquiescence to his commands, had engaged him to forget his former passion.

" THUS resolved, we congratulated ourselves on this fine scheme, unthinking how the whole might terminate; but as it flattered our (then) present purposes, the impetuosity of short-sighted youth hindered our weighing and considering, as we should have done, the end.

" PEDRO promised me, with all the enthusiasm of friendship, to find out Beaumont; and under pretence of visiting me as a lover, to carry on a correspondence between us. Thus we determined to make dupes of our parents, and plumed ourselves on assured success.

" SOON after we had settled the whole of our important concerns, Don Lopez and Don Juan entered, and appeared very well satisfied with our seeming liking of each other.—Indeed my deceived father was so apparently delighted with my affected obedience in giving Pedro a favourable reception, that we were no sooner alone than he snatched me to his bosom, with every mark of parental transport, saying, My dear Clara, how infinitely rejoiced am I to behold thy dutious reception of Don Pedro de Ossuna;—his father started a fear of his not making himself acceptable to you, on account of an indiscreet amour he has been engaged in at

Madrid; but, (continued my poor deceived and partial parent) I told him I could be perfectly assured that the first sight of my Clara, would entirely obliterate all former prepossessions, especially if you behaved with that amiable sweetnes I am now convinced you have; since the young D'Ossuna appears really enamoured with my charming girl.

" WHILE thus my indulgent parent caressed me,—Conscience, that heaven-sent monitor, accused me with deceiving him,—and I was more than once going to throw myself at his feet, acknowledge the intended deception, and implore his pardon ;—but the image of my amiable Beaumont at that instant seemed to present itself before me, and with signs of manifest dejection upbraided me with breach of promise ;—this stopped my duteous intention, and love obtained the victory over fluctuating obedience. I will not weary you with needless descriptions in the progress of my indiscreet passion ; let it suffice to inform you, that Pedro fulfilled his promise in carrying on our amour. He contracted a strict friendship with Beaumont, of whose affections I daily received fresh testimonies, and often saw him in company with my imagined lover ; for as my father now abated considerably in his restrictions, so I was of course less confined.

" THUS situated a month elapsed, during which time preparations were making for my intended nuptials with the son of Don Lopez, from whom I received considerable presents ; my father also had given me jewels to a great value, among which was a miniature picture of himself, set with brilliants, (drawn, as he informed me, just before his marriage with my mother) this, he with affectionate tenderness tied round my neck with his own hands, saying,—Never, my beloved Clara, take this pledge of a father's fondness from thy bosom, but wear it constantly, even after I give you to Don Pedro, since he himself cannot have greater love for thee than thy doating parent.—But why (continued the lovely Spaniard) do I repeat those instances of Don Juan's

tenderness? since they must contribute to exaggerate my fatal breach of duty, and render me still more criminal in disobedience.—But I promised a faithful and candid confession, therefore I could not, in justice to truth, omit these circumstances.

“ DURING the time all the preparations were making, Pedro, Beaumont, and I, seemed totally unconcerned; a pleasing delirium fascinated our understanding till the important day was fixed for the union;—then the agreeable delusion vanished, and roused us all to think on means to prevent the dreaded completion,—though I was unable to form any determination, as a thousand racking apprehensions possessed me, till at length it was finally resolved, that nothing but our leaving Segovia could possibly prevent what we so much dreaded.

“ BEAUMONT, with every fond persuasion, urged me to fly with him to France, where he promised me a safe asylum and welcome reception from his mother, who dwelt at Rheims. Pedro purposed returning to Madrid, and there espouse his charming Elvira immediately, not doubting, he said, but that his father would in time be reconciled, as the lady was equal to himself in birth, and rather superior in fortune.

“ This assurance of success urged Beaumont to enforce the same arguments with me, and, in short, my inconsiderate fond heart too soon agreed to his desire, so that he received my promise of being his when we should arrive at his mother’s.

“ THESE schemes being now concluded, it was entrusted to the Chevalier and Pedro to prepare everything requisite for my elopement, on the very evening before the destined marriage day. It was effected in the following manner:

“ AFTER supper, at which were present my dear deceived parent, Don Lopez, his son, and myself, I pretended that the heat of the room overcame me; upon which Pedro, with all the appearance of a fond lover, proposed our taking a walk in a small garden behind the

house. Our fathers had been in high spirits the whole afternoon, on the approach of the succeeding day, therefore Don Lopez said, in a jocose manner to his son,—ay, ay, go with your bride, Pedro:—then turning to Don Juan, he continued,—I believe we may trust them together, brother, since to-morrow is so near.—To which my dear father smiled consent.—We accordingly left the room, promising a speedy return;—but, alas!—never, never, did the wretched Clara again behold her affectionate parent."

A FLOOD of tears now hindered our lovely Spaniard from proceeding, which, notwithstanding the sight greatly affected both Mrs. Ramsay and your Sylvia, it was productive of much ease to the wounded bosom of our tender guest; for had not the friendly torrent issued, fainting, at least, would have been the consequence of those cruel reflections labouring in her gentle breast; and, notwithstanding our earnest desire to know the sequel of her adventures, we would not permit her to proceed till she had taken some refreshment, and rested two hours, to enable her to go through the whole of her affecting detail.—The fair Clara returned us the most grateful acknowledgments for our apparent apprehensions, and when the limited time was expired, resumed her story thus:

"WHEN Pedro and I had reached the garden, my emotions were so violent that I could hardly support myself. Love and duty had now a severe struggle, tho' the latter for some time seemed most powerful. All my father's late tenderness occurred to my mind in an instant;—the scorpion of ingratitude filled my bosom with such poignant stings, that Pedro could hardly with-hold me from rushing into my deluded father's presence, and confess my whole design!—even the name of Beaumont had at this moment lost its wonted charm; but the son of Don Lopez urging me to be resolute, had now in a manner dragged me to a small gate at the bottom of the garden, through which we were to meet the Chevalier, and enter a lane wherein stood the carriages ready for our journey.

THE moon shone with unusual lustre, so that every object was nearly as conspicuous as at high noon.

ON the opening of the gate, the Chevalier advanced, caught me in his arms, saying,—My life, my dearest Clara!—I heard no more, nor did I recover myself sufficiently to remember my situation, till we had proceeded above a mile; I then found myself supported by Beaumont, who expressed the most infinite delight at my recovery, using every pathetic and tender power of eloquence to soothe my troubled mind.

LOOKING at him for a few moments, with every symptom of excruciating remembrance, (yet joined with affection) I exclaimed,—Oh Beaumont! what have I ventured on thy account? for thee who may justly despise me for my disobedience to an only and affectionate parent!

PRESSING me to his bosom, and kissing the falling tear from my moistened cheek, he said, My life, my soul! distract me not thus with thy bewitching softness: thy Beaumont will ever remember the enchanting obligation;—this proof of thy enviable affection will bind him thine for ever.—But do not, my lovely Clara, (continued he, still holding me to his bosom) torment thy gentle spirits with needless fears;—my friend Pedro has no such doubts;—he appears fully assured of his father's approbation in a short time to his union with Elvira;—then why will my charming maid imagine her parent more inexorable than Don Lopez? parental affection for his dear Clara will certainly return, and we shall be happy. Having very agreeably proceeded for near ten miles, we arrived at _____, where the son of Don Lopez, after many professions of constant friendship, took his leave, in order to pursue his way to Madrid, while we soon set forward for Rheims in France, which place we reached in about twelve days from our leaving Segovia."

WELL, Emily, now I have escorted our fair adventurer from one kingdom to another. I must beg leave for the present there to leave her, since I find it utterly impossible to hold the pen any longer at this time, than just to subscribe

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XVII.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

Richly Park.

SUCH a multiplicity of subjects, my dear Sylvia, have I to write on, that, in short, I hardly know which to begin with,—but, however, good manners will oblige me first to take notice of your last pacquet,—for which, accept the thanks of your Emily a thousand times:—But I could wish you had not experienced more fatigue in writing, than I in reading the adventures of the fair Spaniard,—as then I might have received the satisfaction of knowing the sequel of her leaving the good old Don,—which, between you and I, Sylvia, was a mad affair, that is certain;—trusting herself to be galloped away with so many hundred miles into another kingdom!—Undoubtedly, she must be strangely, and deeply wounded with this same Beaumont!—For my part, I really think I should never be persuaded to such a step, to oblige all the Chevaliers in France.—Ay, but a lover, you will say, and that one of the most amiable, tender, delicate,—with fifty other qualifications to persuade!—Well, there may be some allowance in consideration of those exquisite endowments,—especially as the fair nymph was brought to so alarming a crisis as the eve before the destined nuptial day, with one she could not approve!—We must have a little Christian charity, and by applying her case to ourselves, consider whether we should have acted otherwife!—Alas! not I, I verily believe!—for I abominably hate controul you know, Sylvia,—therefore, for the sake of a little perverseness, perhaps I might have undertaken the same tour, with a favourite lover, as Donna Clara did; so, after this confession, I shall forbear farther censure on her conduct, and proceed to give my friend some account of family affairs, which, though not quite so full of adventurous circumstances as those in—shire, furnish sufficient matter for speculation.

You see, by the date of my epistle, where I am at present situated;—here we have been above a week, much against the will of Lady Susan and my polite sister, who esteem the music of the groves a mere lifeless and insipid sound; and prefer the confused clatter of rumbling wheels, footmens raps, and all the hurry of St. James's, to the most delicate and soothing notes of harmonious Philomel:—However, their accomplished ladyships are doomed to bear for some months, what they esteem an absolute sequestration from all that is enviable;—for my part, I am desirous of meeting elegant cottages, or distressed ladies,—for which purpose I am continually on the tramp from one place to another, within a few miles of the Park;—but I have not as yet met with the least occurrence that may claim the name of Adventure,—for though extremely anxious of such a thing, I am not absolutely an Arabella, imagining every peasant I meet to be some illustrious person in disguise;—indeed, if they were really so, I should encounter a variety every day, there being abundance of those honest rustics within the limits of my peregrinations,—but all exhibiting such pure nature in their deportment, that I have not the least doubt of their being other than they appear;—liberal though, to a degree of excess in their manners, which frequently occasion me more pain in my knees, by returning their artless scrapes, that when I used to be under the tuition of Monsieur Rigadoon, practising curtesies for half an hour, before I was permitted to walk a minuet.

Do not think, Sylvia, I am unattended in those rambles;—no, no, a companion I have, I assure you,—not my sister, she is too delicate for so robust an exercise,—saying, with Mrs. Sullen, in the *Stratagem*, “ Her limbs were not made for leaping of ditches, or clambering of tiles.”

Now, I suppose your penetrating ladyship will imagine a male attendant accompanies me in those excursions. No, Sylvia,—I believe (spite of their boasted complaisance) I should find it rather difficult to procure one, who would

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ever be ready to obey my summons on those occasions ; even the accomplished Harry (as you were once pleased to stile him) would betray some symptoms of irksome constraint ;—however, I have not an opportunity of trying his obedience, as he is still in London, paying constant attendance to his uncle, the Duke of *****, who has been much indisposed for some time with the gout.—As his Grace possesses the highest regard for his nephew, Sir Rowland, (who, you know, is quite a man of the world) desires his son to be punctual in his visits ; lest the caprice of age and infirmities should render his noble uncle forgetful of their consanguinity ; therefore I must not expect to see my Strephon, for some time, in this part of the world ; as by his last letters, he expressed the utmost anxiety at our separation, (quite in the language of a Beaumont) adding a fear of his being obliged to accompany the Duke to Bath, where the physicians have advised him to repair, as soon as he may be able to undertake the journey.

THUS you see, Sylvia, I am doomed, like the turtle, to mourn the absence of my love !—Not very plaintive, though—since I inherit philosophy enough to rise superior to those trivial disappointments !—quite a stoick undoubtedly, you will say !—Well, I will now inform you who it is that is honoured with being female squire to my adventure-seeking ladyship ;—a good girl, I verily believe,—recommended to me by the Countess of L****—whom I esteem a competent judge of merit, therefore readily accepted—Lydia Trueman, and admitted her to the honourable post before-mentioned.

HER father was steward to the late Sir Jasper Arundel, and, by observing a strict integrity throughout his profession, is still continued in his post by Papa, who, ever sensible of merit, in whatever station he finds it, regards the worthy man with that favour he deserves : Lydia being his only child, she has received her principal improvement from her father, who has the felicity of observing a good capacity rendered agreeably conspicuous by his parental tuition.

SHE reads incomparably well, has a pretty turn for poetry, which, however, she seldom indulges, through a modest diffidence of her own merit.—This, Sylvia, is my usual companion, so that when I am disposed for a ramble, I step to the lodge, (a pretty house, so called at the entrance of the Park, where her father resides) and Liddy appears all innocence and cheerfulness, and ready to attend me.

Entre nous, my friend, if this rural beauty was to make her appearance in the *beau-monde*, it is my opinion, some of our most celebrated Belles would betray a few symptoms of envy on their *ashy* cheeks,—but, at present, I believe that is a circumstance which will hardly happen,—her father entertaining no very favourable thoughts of the capital, and esteeming it, as I have heard Liddy say, a wilderness of showy flowers, beautiful to the eye, but most poisonous to every social virtue.—What contracted notions are these Sylvia?—the poor man is absolutely a cynic;—despise the employments practised by the elegant inhabitants of dear, dear London!—(the West end however) What!—to have no elevated notions concerning visiting, operas, scandal, auctions, and the enchanting, improving converse over a pool at quadrille!—Oh! the churl, as Lady Townly says,—has he no sensations for those delightful pursuits!—Such opinions might have suited the sober maxims of Antediluvians, but they are absolutely ridiculous in these enlightened times!—Well, a truce you will say with old Trueman's antiquated sentiments, and inform me of the reason of Sir Robert's anger to Lady Susan:—really, my friend, I am as much a stranger to that mysterious fracas as yourself;—all I know is, that the very next day, orders were given for preparing every thing for our leaving London in two days, which we accordingly did, though marks of visible discontent appeared on her ladyship's countenance.—However, Papa, (who, I am certain, almost adores her, notwithstanding those little disagreements) in order to shift the scene, and qualify her love of company, has just made

a proposal (as I hear from Charlotte) of our visiting Bath for a few weeks, so that you may expect to be entertained with a few critical remarks on the polite multitude at *that* salutary receptacle;—whither they flock in crowds innumerable for various disorders, real and imaginary;—more of the latter than the former I believe, if we may judge from appearances; else we should not find such thronged assemblies,—where few seem to feel any other ills, than those occasioned by the frowns of the fickle Goddess; as, perhaps, a hundred guineas may be lost in a few hours at *that* card-table, where they sat down with a fond expectation of winning double the sum.—Such mortifying disappointments are enough to occasion the vapors no doubt, and render the disorder too stubborn for the salubrious streams to cure, unless (like another Pactolus) golden sands were at the bottom; and then, happy they who could best dive to snatch the glittering particles.

WELL, I will proceed no farther now, Sylvia, but leave the rest on this subject till I visit the aforesaid place. Therefore adieu! write soon, and pray do not complain of being weary, since I shall expect the whole of the fair Clara's remaining adventures, in your next to

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XVIII.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

WERE it not for the tedious task I have imposed upon myself, of relating fair Clara's history, I would vent a little female spleen against your volatile ladyship:—Nay, I can hardly forbear as it is.—How my expectations were raised by the beginning of your letter;—“ Such a multiplicity of subjects have I to write on, Sylvia, that I know not with which I shall begin.”—Truly, I think not, Emily, since, through the whole, I can scarce recollect one, except the description of your new acquaintance, Lydia; and was it not for the sake of the poor girl, I should say your letter reminded

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me of that old fable—The Mountain in Labour,—which—brought forth a mouse.

I APPREHEND this may prove sufficient to warn you against any such promises for the future, unless you perform better;—receive this friendly rebuke as becomes you child, or positively no more pacquets from Meadowfield.

I THINK, at this instant, I can see you tossing up your little saucy face, and hear you exclaim, “Heavens! what airs of importance this girl gives herself! since she is commenced historian, she absolutely imagines herself another Macaulay!” — No, no, Emily, not quite so elevated in my own opinion neither; I do not aspire to so high a title:—The staff and cap of Liberty, Magna Charta, and every appendage which graces the writings of our spirited country woman, are infinitely above the limits of my humble performances;—all I pretend to, is relating the adventures of an unfortunate beauty, as near as possible in her own words, and which, without farther animadversion, I will continue:

“ON our arrival at Rheims (said Donna Clara) we were received with every mark of tenderness by Madame De Beaumont, who had been apprized of each material circumstance, by a letter from her son, a few days before we left Segovia. Her obliging manner, fraught with every symptom of expressive sensibility, was a great means of dispelling my anxiety; her house, equipage, servants, &c. assured me of my lover’s rank, and that, in reality, he was possessed of every advantage—nay, more than he had informed me of;—yet duty to my injured parent, urged me to acquaint him with the imprudent step I had taken, and sue for that pardon I had hardly a right to expect.

“THIS intention (the day after my arrival) I proposed to Beaumont and his mother:—The Lady, with every mark of approbation, applauded my obedience, but the Chevalier urged, that our union might be first solemnized; as then, my charming Clara, continued he, it will be beyond the power of even a father’s commands to separate us.

" My fond heart readily agreed to this solicitation of my lover, on which account it was determined, that we should receive the nuptial benediction in two days.—When Beaumont had obtained my consent, his rapture was inexpressible;—but I will not (continued the fair Spaniard) dwell on a subject I wish to forget, since what followed sufficiently damped those joys, with such accumulated misery, as, perhaps, none but ourselves ever yet experienced.

" THE evening before the destined marriage-day, Madame De Beaumont attended me to my chamber; while I was undressing, and talking with greater vivacity than I had ever done since leaving Segovia, on a sudden I observed her eyes earnestly fixed on the picture of my father, which I had constantly worn round my neck from the very hour he tied it there himself: seeing her attention so much engaged, I could not help enquiring the cause;—to which, instead of answering me, she with infinite emotion said,—My dear child, whose picture is that?—My father's, madam, (returned I)—and was beginning to utter some expressions of affection, when I was interrupted by her giving a faint scream, and falling senseless on the floor.

" AMAZED at this alarming circumstance, I instantly rang the bell with great violence, and on the entrance of her woman, I assisted with trembling aid and confused thoughts, to recover Madame De Beaumont, who no sooner gave signs of returning health, than she ordered the servant to leave the room; after which, looking for a few moments stedfastly on me, and then raising her eyes, she exclaimed,—Gracious heaven! how inscrutable are thy decrees!—to what an abyss of misery would these innocents have been plunged, but for this discovery!—Then again gazing on the picture, and taking it in her hand, as willing to examine it more minutely, while I sat as if petrified with horrid apprehension,—she proceeded.—It is, it is!—Almighty God, accept a sinner's thanks for this discovery! —Addressing herself again to me, she said, (with visible symp-

toms of disordered satisfaction) Oh charming Clara, what a tale have I to tell; yet do not condemn me alone for being the fatal cause of parting you from — I heard no more; excruciating expectation of what would follow overpowered me, and I sunk lifeless into the arms of Madame De Beaumont.

" **SOME** time I continued in this happy state of insensibility, and on my recovery, could not refrain blaming the compassion of her, whose tenderness had revived me to experience grief unutterable;—she folded me in her arms, endeavouring to alleviate my sufferings by every testimony of promised affection, and when she found me more capable of attending to the dreaded éclaircissement, began by saying, My dear young lady, believe me, your exquisite sensations on this alarming circumstance, affect me more than even the recollection of an event I sincerely hoped had been buried in eternal oblivion.—Yes, fair Clara, my imprudence,—nay more, my guilt, must now again be raised from desired concealment;—think no more of my son as thy intended husband, alas! he is——thy brother!

" **PREPARED** as I was for this important secret, my poor tortured heart could hardly support the severe word, and Madame De Beaumont was obliged to use every preventative care to hinder me from fainting a second time;—and yet the conflict was too great to be supported: before she could begin to inform me of her fatal story, I felt a chilling cold run through my veins, as if struck by the inexorable hand of death; a violent fever attended, a strong delirium soon followed, and I remained near three weeks in this pitiable situation, ravaging at intervals on my father, Madame De Beaumont, and the Chevalier; though the last (as I afterwards heard) seemed most to engross my incoherent thoughts; as I would frequently, after a few minutes repose, start up in wild disorder, and exclaim,—Beaumont, my adored Beaumont, where art thou?—then pausing, as if recollecting the fatal secret, cry,—I must not call him thus!—the wretched Clara must not.—Oh torture, torture!—alas! he is my brother.

" IN this wretched situation (continued the unhappy lady) why did not the ghastly king of terrors end that life devoted to calamity? but the great Omnipotent doomed me to suffer a just punishment for the sin of disobedience.

" AT the expiration of three weeks the fever left me, but so weakened and altered, that a more emaciated spectacle can hardly be imagined; the small share of beauty I formerly possessed, seemed entirely vanished.

" MADAME De Beaumont, who had been my constant attendant during this severe illness, appeared all tenderness, and displayed so much humane affection, that (notwithstanding I could not help accusing her in the height of my delirium, as the cause of our cruel disappointment, yet now, that a cool deliberation succeeded) I regarded her with sensations of the most respectful gratitude.

" AS soon as I regained the use of reason, my first inquiry was for the Chevalier; but I received no satisfactory answer till near a week afterwards, his mother being fearful of dwelling too much on the interesting subject, lest a relapse might be attended with more fatal consequences; but when she found me capable of attending to her unhappy story, she one morning entered my chamber, and informed me she had just received a letter from her son, which gave her the greatest satisfaction, as from the day destined for our union, till the receipt of that letter, she was utterly ignorant where he was; for, my dear Clara, (said she) the fatal necessity of informing him how nearly you were allied, obliged me to break the direful secret that very night that I made the discovery by the picture in your bosom; to describe his emotions on hearing my story is impossible;—the cruel disappointment so enraged him, that respect, affection, duty, all that is expected from a child to a parent, seemed totally overthrown by the violent emotions of disappointed love. Indeed, continued Madam de Beaumont, (her eyes swimming with tears) my poor distracted boy at that instant forgot that I was

his parent, and finding by my account the situation you were reduced to, he exceeded the bounds of discretion swearing never to see me more ; nay, when I attempted to hold him, he broke from me in all the fury of desperation, bidding me desist from endeavouring to detain him, lest he should forget even that I was a woman, and spurn me from him.—Yet I can forgive even this, being conscious that I deserve the severest chastisement from offended heaven, that suffered me thus to be treated, even by my own child, as a just punishment for my fatal indiscretion.—But duty has returned with his reason, as in this letter he makes every possible concession for his offence, and craves my pardon in the most humble and respectful manner ;—after which he informs me, that he sat out the very next morning for Segovia, in Spain, being determined to confess the whole affair to Don Juan d'Alcarez, and to satisfy himself whether my assertions were true.

“ HERE (continued Donna Clara) I could not avoid interrupting Madame de Beaumont ;—the mention of my dear deserted father brought many reflections to my mind, and I enquired with impatience, if she could inform me how the Chevalier had found him :—to which she replied, I will conceal nothing from you ; my son says, that your clandestine flight has so much displeased him, that no argument he has hitherto used will bring him to hear of a reconciliation ; but that he will endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to effect what you so much desire.—Charles has indeed found a father in Don Juan, though not in such a manner as his heart could have wished.—Yes, my dear child, (continued Madame de Beaumont) my poor boy has been sufficiently informed that I was not mistaken in the features of him his mother once was criminal with, under the name of Don Antonio de Suenna.—He begs me to write with all possible dispatch, and to inform him of the welfare of his charming sister, who seems to engross his whole thoughts, as there's hardly a sentence through the whole epistle wherein you are not mentioned.—But

read yourself;—(presenting the letter to me, which I received with infinite perturbation)—the well-remembered signature of my once (and even then) adored Beaumont, thrilled my very soul: I found the contents as his mother had related, only with this addition, that my father had conceived an infinite affection for him, not suffering him to remain at any other place than his own house, so that he was in hopes to effect in time that wished-for reconciliation.

"MADAME de Beaumont answered this letter with all the tenderness of a fond parent, to which she prevailed on me to subjoin a postscript, whereby the Chevalier might be assured of my recovery. When this was dispatched, she proposed to inform me in what manner she became acquainted with my father; I returned her my acknowledgments, and expressing a desire to hear the narrative. She immediately began as follows."

BUT I should not have written the last word, Emily, for I have this moment received a summons, or rather invitation, to attend dear Mrs. Ramsay, and the amiable Peggy Nugent; the latter having favoured us with a visit this morning, on her return from a neighbouring cottage, where she had been on a Christian errand from her worthy father;—therefore farewell for a short time, as I intend speedily to resume the affecting story of our fair Unfortunate.—Adieu.

IN CONTINUATION.

WOULD this melancholy detail were finished, Emily; I shall certainly imbibe the spleen, vapours, and a thousand other gloomy attendants, before I have gone through the whole. Pray heaven! if you meet with an adventure (as you are pleased to stile it) at Richly Park, it may be productive of fewer disastrous circumstances than those of our fair heroine, otherwise I desire you will keep it to yourself, my friend, for in short I am almost converted to a weeping Niobe already, and have no very violent desire of being intirely

transformed into so affecting a figure;—however I may proceed, otherwise your ladyship will accuse me with breach of promise, and display such poignant expression on the occasion, as may, perhaps, wound more than those afflicting scenes which I have yet to describe therefore to continue.

“ As there is little in my life (said Madame de Beaumont to Donna Clara) more than might be expected from a female of fortune, who is left to her own guidance and discretion when extremely young, I shall not weary you with repeating needless and frivolous circumstances, but dwell on the fatal amour between myself and your father, whom I first saw at an assembly in Paris;—he was then in the bloom of life, elegant in person, and, alas! too much so in behaviour for my inexperienced heart to resist. The name by which he was commonly known, was that of *the handsome Don Antonio de Suenna*; and though by birth a Spaniard, he appeared to inherit the ease and polite vivacity of the most accomplished Parisian.

“ THE particular manner with which he addressed me that fatal evening, flattered my vanity and love of admiration; and only my youth, joined to the misfortune of having no one to correct my inconsiderate conduct, can be an excuse for my falling an easy victim to the solicitations of him who soon confessed himself my lover;—his all-soothing tenderness and respect was too powerful to be long resisted;—in short,—he vowed,—protested;—I believed,—and fell.

“ DURING the space of two months we lived in guilty pleasures, at the expiration of which time he pleaded a necessity of visiting Italy, but I have the greatest reason to believe that satiety was the only prevailing motive for this separation, though he kept up the appearance of the most faithful lover even at the parting moment:—nay I am convinced that *that* tenderness and shew of sorrow was feigned in him which I experienced in reality;—for I never again saw, or received the least account of him, till about a year after, when I heard he

was returned to Spain, and had married a lady of rank and fortune.

" My poor boy, (the unhappy pledge of our mutual guilt), was at that time but a few months old ;— our residence was at Paris, where I had been born and educated, and left at the age of seventeen to my own management, by the loss of my parents, who both died in one year, leaving me (their only child) a considerable fortune.

" WHEN the news of Don Antonio's perfidy reached me, I for some time experienced infinite affliction ; but at length maternal affection determined me not to hazard my life nor health in fruitless uneasiness, but to preserve both, if possible, for the sake of my guiltless infant. Yet, as Paris was now become hateful, I resolved to quit it ; for which purpose I wrote to a relation who resided in this city, desiring her to provide me a house suitable to my rank.

" THIS was accordingly done with the utmost dispatch, so that ere I reached my twentieth year I was an inhabitant of Rheims, which, being near fourscore miles from the capital, I imagined no malicious whispers could reach so far as to disturb that repose that I hoped in time to gain.

" My relation was the only person I made acquainted with my unhappy story ; I was therefore regarded as a young widow of fortune, on which account numerous were the offers I received in behalf of marriage ; but I was firmly determined never to enter that state, and therefore, by a constant dismission of my suitors as soon as they made the declaration, I was at length freed from all importunity of that kind ; and my whole care centered in regarding with pleasure the growing perfections of my beloved boy.

" I BESTOWED on him the most liberal education, and as he grew up, gratified his darling inclination by permitting him to travel ; for which purpose, when he attained the age of twenty-one, (i. e. about two years since) I settled on him a sufficient income, but I could

never assume courage enough to declare to him the fatal secret of his birth. My relation, the only person at Rheims acquainted with my unhappy story, died a few months after my residence at that place; I therefore flattered myself it would remain inviolable from him, as I had frequently told him his father had been a superior officer in the royal guards at Paris, and was killed in an engagement against the English, when he was but an infant.

“ THIS deception succeeded with his unsuspecting nature, which, joined to a volatile disposition, and a great love of rambling, hindered his doubting the truth.

“ IN one of these excursions to Spain, he became fatally enamoured of his charming sister, the mystery of which was unravelled by the picture of your father, fair Clara, my once powerful conqueror; and it only remains to inform you, that *that* portrait you are now in possession of, was once in mine!—This may seem strange, but it will cease to appear so, when I relate what yet remains of my fond unsuspecting credulity.

“ ABOUT a month after I first knew him I esteemed as Don Antonio de Suenna, he presented me with it.—Just before the cruel declaration I received of his visiting Italy, one evening, with all the tenderness of an enamoured lover, he seized my hand, on which I wore the little representative as a bracelet, saying, My charming Isabella, may I flatter myself this copy of him who adores you, deserves to be placed in a more endearing situation?—why will not my angel permit it to be worn on that bosom, which contains the heart of its original?

“ I, EVER willing to oblige him, said that I would with pleasure comply with his desire, but that it was not made properly, and must of necessity receive some alteration, before he could fix it to a ribbon for that purpose.

“ IF that is the only obstacle to my fond demand, (replied Don Antonio) permit me, my lovely girl, to get it altered, that it may be worn as I wish it should; then, with some endearing compliment, he took it from my arm, and the next day, told me he had left it at a

eweler's for the purpose before-mentioned.—A few days after he informed me of an unavoidable necessity of visiting Italy for a short time.—The anxiety I experienced on that account, hindered all enquiries for the picture; so that I never saw either him or his effigies more, till with infinite surprize I beheld it round your neck.—Pardon me, dear Clara, (continued Madame de Beaumont) but I must believe the faithless man (excuse the epithet) deprived me of it, lest, at any time, the well-imitated resemblance might betray his guilt in ruining an innocent maid, to screen which, he assumed a fictitious name, to deceive me, and prevent the knowledge of other amours, I much fear he was frequently engaged in.—But, alas! his image was too deeply imprinted in my breast, for either time or absence to obliterate; so that I no sooner beheld the picture, than a thousand rushing reflections occasioned the visible emotions I experienced;—and when I took it in my hand to examine it still nearer, I was convinced, that the cause of my unhappy tears was real:—Two small initial letters of his fictitious name, at the bottom, is a plain demonstration.

“ Here (said Donna Clara) did Madame de Beaumont shew me an A, and an S, which I had never before observed in the picture; and then proceeded again to delineate the violent fury of her son, on the discovery she had made to him,—that being the first time he knew, for truth, who was in reality his father.—But, as this circumstance has been sufficiently described already, (continued the unfortunate Clara) I shall avoid a repetition of so disagreeable a theme, and proceed with as much expedition as possible, to conclude my own unhappy story.

“ A FEW weeks after this eclaircissement, I began to be rather more composed, and resigned to that fate which seemed inevitable.—In order to promote my returning tranquility, Madame de Beaumont (who had entirely won my grateful affection by her tender concern) proposed my entering into company, which, till now, I had utterly avoided.

" I CONSENTED to her obliging advice, and was introduced as a relation of hers to all her acquaintances who, though not very numerous, consisted of people of genteel life; and possessing a vivacity so natural to the French in general, it proved a great means of dispelling the gloom I frequently experienced, when thinking on my cruel disappointment.

" YET, notwithstanding my utmost efforts to overcome the fatal passion, Beaumont, in imagination, would frequently obtrude, arrayed with those perfections that, at first sight, subdued and conquered me — his sister.—Oh! how would that thought wound me, as if extended on a rack, fraught with the most exquisite power of tormenting!

" AMONG the acquaintance of Madame de Beaumont, was a lady nearly of her own age, under whose care was entrusted a niece, whose parents resided in England, but who had permitted their daughter to remain with her aunt, during three years, at Rheims, in order to her obtaining a fluency and propriety in the French tongue.

" THIS young lady (named Pellham) was a few months older than myself, possessing a disposition infinitely agreeable, being neither so extremely volatile as the French, or inheriting the full gravity of the Spaniard, but a happy mixture of both, which gave me a most favourable idea of the English;—and the natural prepossession to her native country, would often occasion her to assure me, that they were possessed of dispositions requisite to enjoy life with the utmost felicity and ease; being a people generous, without ostentation; valiant, without rashness; obliging, without fawning civility; honest and hospitable, without an intended shew of being so:—From the peer to the peasant, enjoying unbounded liberty, without fearing the slavish fitters of arbitrary government.

" THESE, and several other encomiums on England, raised in me a desire to visit the happy isle, hoping, likewise, that by such a tour I might, in time, be able to forget my still adored Beaumont.

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" Miss Pellham perceived my thoughts, and, with obliging earnestness, pressed me to accompany her on her return, as the allotted time for her residence in France was nearly expired.—She urged this request with such an apparent shew of friendship, that, in a short space, I made her the confidant of my unhappy story, and laying open the whole secret, acquainted her with my circumstances; for though born to infinite expectations, I could, at that period, call nothing my own, but few jewels and trinkets of value, which I had brought with me from Segovia, forfeiting all hopes of what I might have expected, by my imprudent and undutiful opement from my father.

" THE friendly Miss Pellham was truly affected with my narrative, and, with great delicacy, begged me to lay aside all such disagreeable considerations: assuring me of the most cordial reception from her parents, she pressed me to accept of an asylum under their roof, till some fortunate event might restore me to Don Juan's protection;—and that I might be assured of her promise, she wrote immediately to England, and represented me with such evident marks of exalted friendship, that I was almost overcome by her unparalleled generosity.

" GRATITUDE for the favours I had received from Madame de Beaumont, obliged me to inform her of the intended scheme:—She, for some time, endeavoured to dissuade me from it, urging (besides her unwillingness to part with me) that, should the wished-for reconciliation with my father be brought to succeed, and I not be found with her, ready to obey the desired mandate for my returning to Segovia, it might exasperate him beyond a farther hope of pardon.

" THIS reasoning was undoubtedly just, and I continued unresolved in what manner to proceed, when a letter from the Chevalier to his mother induced me to fly from Rheims, lest an interview with him (whom I yet could think on no otherwise than as a lover) should involve me in greater misfortunes than I had yet expe-

rienced.—He informed her of having received my father's permission to visit her, and hinted a cruel determination of Don Juan's placing me in a monastery:—This he expressed with such visible marks of disapprobation, joined with a pathetic fervour of violent affection beyond the feelings of a brother, that my prudence caught the alarm, and represented how dangerous the interview between hearts like ours would be,—heavily sensible only of those soft sensations, which consanguinity prohibited us from cherishing.

“ These thoughts I imparted to Madame de Beaumont, free from all reserve, intimating also my abhorrence to a monastic life, with which my father seemed to threaten me.—My arguments appeared to have sufficient weight; she applauded my prudent caution; and my young friend soon after receiving a letter from her parents, giving me the most obliging invitation I could desire, it was determined on all sides for Miss Pellham and I, in less than a week, to bid adieu to France.

“ WHEN the appointed time arrived, the parting between me and Madame de Beaumont was too affecting to be properly described;—let it suffice to say, that the generous mother of my beloved Chevalier slipped a pocket-book into my hand as I entered the carriage, which, for some time, I was unable to inspect, till urged to it by my friend Olivia,—(so, for the future, let me stile Miss Pellham) therefore, on opening it, I found it contained a bill of exchange, on a banker at Paris, for the sum of one thousand pounds sterling.—This instance of generosity surprised me,—my gratitude broke forth in such expressive exclamations, as greatly affected Olivia, and her aunt who accompanied us to England.

“ THE book also contained a letter from Madame de Beaumont, wherein she assured me of her unalterable affection, desired I would be constant in writing to her during my residence in England, and expressed an endearing hope of seeing me again in a short time. She concluded with saying, that nothing but her son's speedy arrival at Rheims should have prevented her from at-

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my self deter-
sting me to Calais, from which place we were to
embark for England.

"AND now another article appeared, which I prized infinitely above the whole!—this was a picture of the Chevalier, drawn just before his fatal tour to Segovia.—The sight of this well-imitated object of my affections, occasioned the trickling tear to steal involuntarily down my cheek,—but I will not (continued fair Clara) dwell on the tender remembrance, but inform you, that in four days from our leaving Rheims we arrived at Calais, where we soon after embarked for England, and reached the residence of Mr. Pelham (father to my friend) the day following."

WELL, Emily, here is another kingdom, into which have introduced our fair adventurer.—Suspend thy curiosity a little longer, child, for I positively must rest for a short time; when, in consideration of your submissive behaviour, and a promise to be more particular in your next as a return for all this inundation of scribbling, you shall receive farther information from

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.